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CHRISTIAN COURIER
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Analyst looks at 21st century church

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — What will the church look like in the 21st century? What impact is a fast-changing society having on the church's structure and ministry? Analyzing trends in church and society is Lyle Schaller's mission.

At 74, Schaller's expertise comes from many years of varied experience in city government, in the ministry in the Methodist Church in the U.S., in an inter-denominational church planning organization, at a seminary, and, for 22 years, at the Yokefellow Institute, an inter-denominational retreat centre. Schaller also publishes a monthly newsletter, "The Parish Paper," and still writes prolifically.

Schaller was in Edmonton in early March for an inter-denominational church leadership conference. He led eight seminars for church leaders, examining his current interest, "Ministry for the Third Millennium."

"I believe the third millennium is here already. It arrived about a dozen years ago with the beginning of the collapse of communism," says Schaller. "That has had a profound impact on society, and has changed the way we look at life." Now, all the preconceptions are up for grabs and change is in the air, he says.

Schaller described some of those changes. For one thing, he says, pastoring has become much more difficult. "I was a pastor when being a pastor was easy and travel was relatively difficult," he said with a smile. "Now when travelling has gotten easier and pastoring more difficult, I travel!" People are more demanding; they bring higher expectations to their experience in church; they want quality in the programs, the music, the facilities, the staff.

There's also a lot more competition today for people's time. Shopping, sports, entertainment, work, all call out to us. People used to look to the church for

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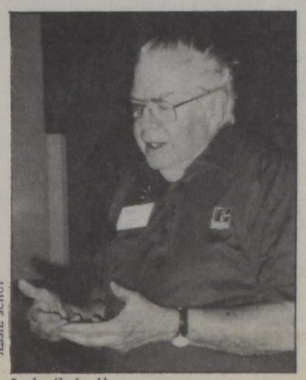

JESSIE SCHUT

Lyle Schaller

"Dangling feet" by Raymond J. Schraa

Canadians help free slaves in Sudan

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The government of the Sudan has been sanctioning slavery and genocide, and forcing its people to become Muslims. But some Canadian Christians have been working to restore the freedom of Sudanese slaves and give them a new lease on life.

Cal Bombay, vice-president of missions for Crossroads Christian Communications, read details last year about slavery in the Sudan and shared these last December with viewers of *100 Huntley Street*, a popular TV program produced by Crossroads. He made an appeal to viewers to do something about the situation. As a result, Canadians sent in $100,000 within about four weeks. Bombay and others at Crossroads then took the money to the Sudan and used it to redeem slaves.

Following a 'higher law'

In February, Bombay invited Baroness Caroline Cox, deputy speaker of the British House of Lords and president of Christian Solidarity International to appear on *100 Huntley Street*. The Baroness and John Eibner, who works with Christian Solidarity in Switzerland, told of their first-hand experiences in the Sudan. Bombay and others left on March 11 on a special

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News

Analyst sees trend toward larger churches

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community. "Now, the quickest, easiest way to make a friend for a newcomer in my community is to sign your child up for soccer," says Schaller. "You'll meet all kinds of other parents as you watch the games. And those leagues meet on Sundays."

Denominations are also competing with churchgoer's allegiances. With the growing acceptance of inter-denominational marriages, couples will often choose a church that's different from either of their backgrounds. And people no longer necessarily attend the church nearest them.

Mega-model

Large regional congregations which appeal to a very specific segment of the population and draw people from a wide radius, are a growing trend in church demographics. A promiment example: the non-denominational mega-model Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago suburb of South Barrington, Ill. It "markets" itself towards a specific white-collar population and attracts 15,000 people every weekend to its "seeker-sensitive" services.

Do we really like 'small'?

While many people wistfully say they believe that small is beautiful, Schaller has seen little evidence that people practice what they profess. Instead, there's a societal trend toward "bigness" that has become apparent in churches, as well. There are increasing numbers of very large churches, while the number of middle-sized congregations of 200-700 worshippers is shrinking. Today, 14 per cent of the churches in North America hold half of the church-going population.

Edmonton, too, seems to be following the trend. Says Bob Jones, pastor at Central Pentecostal Tabernacle which hosted the conference, "Fifteen years ago, there was one large church that had Sunday attendance of over 1,000, and that was this one. Now eight big churches attract at least 800 worshippers every Sunday, and they're all growing."

TV and computers have had an enormous impact on how people are able to listen to sermons, says Schaller. Churches now are ministering to a whole generation that grew up with these technologies as parts of their lives, making that generation much more visually oriented than previous churchgoers. While the best preachers used to know how to paint word pictures, now they may find themselves turning to slide pictures, drama or other visual aids.

Previous generations heard sequential sermons: an introduction, three points and a conclusion. But TV has changed that, too. Now people are used to being involved in several story lines running alongside each other. Many preachers are picking up that concept. "A preacher may start out with a biblical narrative," says Schaller. "Then, he [or she] will switch to a different theme — similar things that are going on in your life, for instance — and for the rest of the sermon will switch back and forth between the two themes. Increasingly, more young people respond better to two story lines."

From sequential to concurrent

At the heart of that trend is also a change in society's living patterns. Previous generations thought of life as sequential: you're born, go to school, get married and have a job before you have children. But young people are experiencing life as a concurrent pattern, with many things going on at the same time. They may have a job while going to school and having children, for instance.

Schaller quoted an article by a prominent American sociologist called "Bowling Alone" (see CC, Jan. 31, p. 13). Research shows that people just aren't joining groups the way they used to. People would rather "bowl alone" than on a team. And "chequebook membership," rather than action-oriented membership in organizations, is becoming common. "The church needs to prove over and over again to people that it is a body worth belonging to," says Schaller.

Modern society increasingly knows little or nothing about the story of salvation. While a recent Angus-Reid poll showed that 90 per cent of Canadians said they believe in a God or a supreme being who is concerned about their life, only 20 per cent had attended a religious service in the previous week.

Schaller is convinced that the main mission of the church needs to be the Great Commission: making disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey Jesus' commands.

How it does that will change over time and cultures. It's Schaller's job to make the part of the Body of Christ with which he comes into contact aware of what's happening out there, challenging it to find new ways to fulfil Christ's command to make disciples everywhere.

Christians reunite slaves and families

... continued from page 1

mission to record the plight of slaves in the Sudan and to free about 300 of them. Those enslaved are mostly Dinka women and children from the southern Sudan captured by raiders from the north and from different ethnic groups.

"We flew in illegally," says Bombay, explaining that they landed in Nyamlell (southern Sudan), which the Sudanese government has declared off limits to aid organizations. But Bombay defends the group's actions, saying, "There's a higher law from the Lord that we have to help our brothers." The southern Sudan has been devastated by frequent military offensives and slaves raids.

The main purpose of the trip was to free slaves, but the group also carried medical supplies and planned to gather further information about violations of human rights in the region.

Strange rendezvous

To get to the rendezvous point with slave traders, Bombay and the others "walked 13 miles in 52 degrees C. heat." Once there, the group paid more than $100,000 (Cdn) to free 319 slaves.

LEE ABSALOM

Some of the freed slaves and their families in the southern Sudan.

"The negotiation was done in advance," explains Bombay. "We met with the slave traders. They retrieved the slaves. They were puzzled that we'd redeemed the slaves and set them free."

Meeting with the slave traders was "kind of a strange situation," says Bombay. He was thrilled to see people set free but angry with the slavers for profiting from human suffering.

Two hundred slaves were freed with Canadian donations; 99 were freed with money raised by local Dinka people; the rest were freed with money from Christian Solidarity.

Still up to 40,000 slaves

Most of the slaves are Dinka people, the largest black ethnic group in the country, Bombay explains. "An estimated 35,000 to 40,000 are still in slavery."

Besides this, 1.5 million Dinkas have been killed in recent years by forces sanctioned by the Sudanese government. The government allows the slavery and militia groups that are forcing people in the south to become Muslims. "This regime is becoming Ayatollah-like," comments Bombay.

Since 1995, Christian Solidarity workers have made several trips and done much research on the atrocities in the Sudan. As a result, the group came up with a strategy to achieve the abolition of slavery there. The first part of the plan is to rescue slaves from bondage and return them to their families. This was made possible by an agreement between chiefs of the Dinkas and the Rezegats, a nomadic group. The Dinkas gave the Rezegats the right to graze their cattle on Dinka lands and the Rezegats agreed to facilitate the return of slaves to their families for a price of two or three head of cattle per slave.

But most families with enslaved relatives have been unable to raise the redemption fee because they have been made destitute by theft or slave raids. So, Christian Solidarity has been sending money to local Sudanese leaders to help the poorest families buy back the freedom of their loved ones. Crossroads co-operated closely with Christian Solidarity on the latest mission to the Sudan.

A second mission has been to encourage reconciliation between the Arab and Dinka peoples of the southern Sudan. According to a report written by Baroness Cox and Eibner about the March visit, "We found that increasing numbers of Arab clans are subscribing to these peace agreements and that consequently there have been no slave raids in this area during this dry season."

Promoting reconciliation

During their latest visit, Christian Solidarity members interviewed former slaves and their families who had been rescued, as well as local civic and church leaders and even the slave traders who returned the slaves.

Apin Apin Akot was one Sudanese man whose wife and two daughters were taken as slaves by raiders in February 1995. In an attempt to rescue them, Akot sold all his cattle and went to look for his family. Paying an Arab to help him find them, he confronted the owners and tried to buy their freedom. The owner agreed to sell back

See **SUDANESE** *page 3...*

The church shouldn't speak politically

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Most of the major Christian denominations in Canada and the United States have committees or agencies which attempt in some fashion to address their governments on the crucial political issues of the day. In both countries the Roman Catholic bishops have published pastoral letters on war and peace and on the economy. Even the popes have written a series of encyclicals which together constitute an enduring legacy of Catholic social teaching. It is not only the *major* denominations that speak out on political matters. Even the Canadian branch of the Christian Reformed Church has a Committee for Contact with the Government. The existence of such a committee is somewhat anomalous, given the CRC's Kuyperian heritage. Of course, Abraham Kuyper was a strong proponent of Christian political action and was instrumental in founding the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands as an avenue for believers to be involved in the political process.

Defined role

But given Kuyper's distinction between the church as Body of Christ and the church as institution, it is questionable whether the latter ought to engage the political realm directly. Such church-based political activity would seem not to accord very well with the insight that the institutional church is but one manifestation of the Body of Christ. Pietistic Christians tend to decry all Christian political action because they see it compromising the distinctive task of the church, which is to preach the Word of God and to celebrate the sacraments.

One need not embrace pietism to see that whenever a denomination speaks out on a controversial issue, such as abortion, welfare reform or homosexual rights, it risks alienating its members who may not agree with the stances it has taken. More seriously, it could be taken to imply that such dissenting parishioners are less than fully members in good standing.

Working out the place of the state

Does this mean that Christians should withdraw from politics and refrain from taking political positions? Not at all. As agents of God's Kingdom, we believers have a responsibility to act politically in a way that is obedient and pleasing to him. This means, first of all, that we must work to develop a public philosophy rooted in an understanding of the distinct place of the state in God's world. We must recognize the political authorities as fulfilling the central God-given task of doing public justice. As such, we must view them as God's servants.

Second, we must work out the policy implications of this public philosophy, which includes articulating approaches to the very issues mentioned above. In so doing, however, we must recognize that, although we may properly claim that such policies conform to our public philosophy and ultimately to our Christian worldview, we cannot claim for them the same ultimacy or certainty that attach to that worldview.

Diverse implications

Christians believe that murderers ought justly to be punished for their crimes. But they legitimately disagree as to whether premeditated murder calls for the death penalty or life imprisonment, either of which can be defended on the basis of Christian principles.

It is entirely appropriate for a Christian justice organization to make policy recommendations on, for example, the legal status of homosexual partnerships and the extension of "spousal" benefits to such couples. Nevertheless, while the institutional church is fully within its mandate to proclaim God's message of justice to its members, it must leave the fleshing out of its policy implications to the members themselves, acting in and through specialized, non-ecclesiastical organizations. It should not try to assume this task for itself.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., and figures he will get his one-controversial-column-annually out of the way early this year.

Sudanese family rescued

... continued from page 2

his wife and one daughter but not the other one. She was nine years old — almost old enough to be sold as a concubine, so Akot's money was not sufficient and he had to return home without her.

But Christian Solidarity and Crossroads gave Akot the money he needed to buy his second daughter's freedom. Once the family was reunited, Akot expressed his thanks: "Today I'm so happy and I cannot forget the help you gave me.... When you gave me the money and I got my daughter back, I felt as if I had been born again."

Akot's daughter, Akec Apin, told her story: "When I was captured, my hands were tied with strong rope. All the bad jobs were given to me — grinding dura in the house and carrying water from the well at night. I was just given leftovers on the plates for food. If I was slow fetching the water, my master beat me with a big stick. All the family beat me."

A local Roman Catholic leader, William Aryuon, said of the redemptive mission: "We are very happy that the Christian church in the West ... can see us in our sad situation and continues to visit us and to tell our story. If people like you visit us, this increases Christianity in our area.... If you come, this encourages us and strengthens our faith."

Many slaves were abused

All of the slaves who were freed were women and children, Bombay explains. Many had been beaten or sexually abused by their captors.

Now that 319 slaves have been freed, Bombay says "those who have families will return to them." Those who have no family left will be taken care of by the chiefs of their villages. But many of the freed slaves will have little to go back to, because their villages were raided and looted by militia groups. Therefore, Bombay sees a need for follow-up work.

"We're urging people to support our emergency relief and development fund," he says. "As far as I'm concerned, this is just the beginning."

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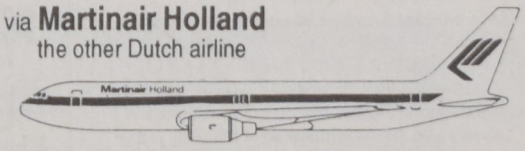

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Editorial

Lifting the curse of the white man's poison

The book *Crazywater* (first published in 1993) is an unusual book. It wasn't on the shelves of our local libraries so I got it through an inter-library loan from the Ottawa Public Library. The book is primarily a collection of stories told by 75 different aboriginal people who have struggled or are struggling with alcohol. The book's title refers to the term used by Stoney Indians for alcohol: *gahtonejabee meenee* meaning: water that makes you crazy.

The story of how alcohol has destroyed so many aboriginal lives is a tragic one. As author Brian Maracle, an award-winning journalist of the Mohawk Nation, indicates, native people "have the dubious distinction of being the only race of people in the country to have a government program [the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program] geared to combat our alcoholism." The very existence of the program Maracle sees as a slap in the face, "contributing to the misperception that 'all native people are drunks.'"

But he also admits that according to surveys taken in the Yukon and Saskatchewan, fully one third of the adult Indian population has a drinking problem. And those who do not have a drinking problem feel the effects of alcoholism "when a friend or family member loses [his or her] job, home, family, life or self-respect to alcohol."

The author sees alcohol as a symbol of the holocaust that has fallen on his people for the past 300 years. The price is horrendous as it shows itself in the form of "beatings, accidents, injuries, suicides, murders, arrests, jail terms, fires, drownings, sexual abuse, child abuse, child neglect, poor health, child apprehensions, unemployment and welfare dependency."

Why so much addiction?

No one fully understands why alcohol has such a grip on the native population of North America. The theories range between sociological (native people drink to cope with the bad feelings caused by racism), psychological (they copy the behavior of their parents, who copied the behavior of fur traders) and biogenetic (native people have inherited a defective gene that causes them to become alcoholic; thus alcoholism is a disease). Native addiction counsellors seem to say that the major reason is loss of cultural identity, followed by poverty and unemployment.

Whatever the cause, there seems to be a marked cultural difference between how Canadians of European origin tend to consume alcohol and how aboriginal people do. One young Blood called Rebecca says that she has yet to meet an Indian who is a social drinker but that several of her white friends are. Her conclusion is that drinking is not for Indians.

A paternalistic solution

It seems almost appropriate, then, that the Canadian government made it illegal for status Indians to buy or possess alcohol in the Indian Act of 1868. This abolition of alcohol for native people was not completely lifted until 1985, 117 years later. But in the meantime it had simply heaped more insult on the native peoples and confirmed that, according to white society, Indians could not be trusted to solve their own problems.

What the abolition of alcohol for Indians accomplished was that many status Indians gave up their status in order to be free from that restriction. The result was division among native groups (status and non-status) and further erosion of native pride.

White society with its European institutions and built-in racism robbed the aboriginal nations of their language, culture, land and dignity with its assimilation policies and refusal to honor treaties. Canadian churches added to that policy with their own brand of cultural assimilation.

Brian Maracle does not blame individual Canadians but the collective he calls "Old Man Canada," which "coldly and deliberately poisoned us with his policies and legislation just as surely as if he had held us to the ground with his knee on our chest and used a funnel to pour the booze down our throat."

One only has to read the accounts of how the respectable Hudson's Bay Company, one of the founding companies of Canada and the British empire, shipped barrels of whiskey to the north in exchange for fur to understand that the funnel image is not so far-fetched.

A historical debt to pay

Instead of addressing the problems inherent in Canadian policies and legislation, successive governments continue their paternalistic attitude toward native peoples and do little more than address symptoms. Citizens for Public Justice and the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada rightly support the main recommendations of last year's report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Rights, a report that cost millions of dollars, took five years to write and seems to be gathering dust on government shelves.

Why are governments not more pro-active in settling land claims and allowing native people to have control over their own schools, police force and hospitals, for example? Why is the healing of native societies not seen as a priority by Ottawa and the provincial capitals? Is it because native people make up less than four per cent of Canada's population? Is it because we are afraid to upset the economic apple cart which benefits the establishment more than its victims?

Signs of hope and healin'

Reading *Crazywater* is an overwhelming experience for those of us who have been sheltered from the onslaught of alcoholism. By the author's calculation, a hundred thousand of his "brothers and sisters from all parts of Great Turtle Island [North America] have gone to an early grave with alcohol in their blood."

But there are signs of hope. As one 27-year-old Chipewyan woman wrote: "My people are on a journey of healin' so that we will rightfully take our place in this society."

The book has all kinds of accounts of how individuals broke with the power of crazywater.

But these "conversions" do not address the urgent need for structural improvements and the righting of historical injustices. May the native peoples become stronger, even if it means that we have to become economically and politically weaker. **BW**

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Tel: (905) 682-8311;
Fax: (905) 682-8313;
E-mail: cceditor@aol.com

Letters

Creationism story 'a disaster'

The story on the back page of your March 28 issue makes statements which are refuted by and contrary to the report of the study committee on creation and evolution to the 1991 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. I will just mention a few points which are stated.

The most serious is that it talks as if creation and evolution views always oppose each other. According to Morris of California's Institute for Creation Research they do, but not according to Reformed scientists. Creation and evolution are not opposing views. God is able to create and uphold his creation using evolution.

According to the Reformed creeds, God's work in creation cannot be considered apart from his work in upholding creation (see *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 9). Christians who study evolution will never say that evolution is a process not guided by God, who created. No one in our churches claims that evolution is "just a natural process," nor is it used by them as a "veil for the religion of atheism." Evolutionary processes are also guided by God.

Pope's view a heresy

The last paragraph of the story contains an un-Reformed heresy when it says that "the soul is created immediately by God from nothing." A human being *is* a living soul, not *has* a living soul, says the Bible. So a human being in his or her totality is a child of his or her parents. Because of that, the Bible can say that in Adam we all sinned. Studying the Bible will show that the Word for "soul" — *nephesh* — is often translated as "living being," for example in Gen. 1:21, where it refers to animals.

Students who come from schools where evolution is denied and go to universities to study biology will have a very tough time. Not everything can be proved, but that there is evolution is undeniable. When they meet that and have to study it, they need to have somebody next to them — a biologist who trusts in God. If, however, the atmosphere is destroyed before they get to university, their trust in church doctrines is lost.

The type of creationism propagated by the ICR is not accepted by many, maybe not by any, Christian Reformed biologists. I regret that the story appeared as is, without any disclaimer. Please make sure that after this disaster, that synodical report is discussed (Report 28, p. 367, CRC *Agenda for Synod 1991*).

Jan de Koning
Willowdale, Ont.

Creation Researchers use mental trickery

I'm sorry to see that the news article "Creationists argue against the Pope's comments" (CC, March 28) presents as fact the un-Reformed notions of the Instituted for Creation Research (ICR).

These young-earth creationists at ICR divide the world into two camps: those who agree with them, and all the rest. Their own views require a literalistic interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2, based on preconceived ideas of how God works, and they assume a secular and deistic worldview.

Their view, says the story, "seeks to demonstrate the scientific evidence for creationism. It does not dispute the evidence for what happened over the course of natural history."

Of course it does. It dismisses out of hand, for example, the unmistakable evidence from many sources that God took his first step in the creation of the universe 15 billion years ago.

They say that the bad guys, the evolutionists, "believe that life is the product of a natural evolving process and that we exist because we are the product of chance." John Morris, president of ICR, is credited in the article with saying that "most people [don't] buy the idea that their distant ancestors originated out of the primordial ooze and that their forebears were animals."

Looking righteous

If you object to those views you look very righteous. You have God on your side, while those on the other side fight against God. They piously state, by way of contrast, their belief that "life exists because there's a creator God who has a plan and purpose for his creation."

But this mental trickery starts to come apart when Morris is reported to say that "God supernaturally brought the universe into existence, put in place the natural laws, and it has been operating accordingly ever since."

You can hardly make a more deistic statement than this. It implies that God put everything in place and then let it run by itself (except for miracles).

I believe that God created the world, as the Bible teaches us, and that he upholds everything by his providence moment by moment, as the Bible and John Calvin teach. God reveals himself in the Bible and in the world he created and sustains.

Creationists do the whole world a disservice by setting up these two opposing camps. I certainly don't fit into either camp. Who has the right to define what's true and then put everyone outside their camp onto the other, wicked side? We should not be taken in by the well-intended but false propaganda of the young-earth creationists.

Robert VanderVennen
Scottsdale, Arizona

The story referred to by Mr. de Koning and Dr. VanderVennen was a news story, as Dr. VanderVennen points out. That means the story presented the opinions of the people interviewed and discussed, which they stated as "fact," and which may or may not be the author's or CC's views. Writer Gordon Legge reported on the creation/evolution views of people at the Institute for Creation Research, and on the Pope's views — which, we agree with Mr. de Koning, are "un-Reformed." **Editor**

Missions need your personal involvement

John Tamming's opinion piece ("Low mission support calls for review," CC, March 28) reveals an age-old tension in mission work. Is missions a business, or a fruit that grows out of love for God?

In missions, do we do what we feel we can afford, or do we urge each other on to great involvement and sacrificial giving? We as a [Christian Reformed] church have to ask: What would Christ do?

I think God would love to have us evangelize in 130 countries instead of the 30 we are now involved in. I am not so sure that "downsizing" World Missions because of lack of missionaries or financial support is an option that God would want us to consider. This would be like cancelling our second Sunday service because nobody wants to go.

God's ways and his will for our lives don't necessarily correspond with our Western economic methods of doing business. God's call for our church is that we be faithful ambassadors of his Kingdom.

Perhaps Mr. Tamming should go on a volunteer missions work crew overseas. My wife and I did, and it was truly moving to see the great work that God has done through our missionaries, in that people of entirely different cultures now honor and worship the same Lord we do.

The tendency to put a price tag on mission work comes easy if you remain emotionally and physically detached from it. Our family is preparing to leave for Mali this summer as long-term missionaries, and we are humbled and gratified to serve God in this way.

God wants us to be stewardly, but he also calls us to be obedient servants. Our missions offices pray daily that God's will be done as they carry out mission plans for our church. Having witnessed the work, I think they are doing God's will. Instead of critiquing the structural inefficiencies let's get excited about mission work, get personally involved, and encourage each other to an increased level of prayer and financial support.

Tom de Ruiter
Pembroke, Ont.

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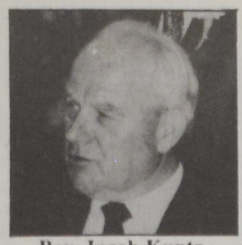


Rev. Jacob Kuntz

On cloning

The* Catholic Register *of March 10, 1997, gives us the Vatican's first reaction to the news of the cloning of an adult sheep in Scotland. It was to be expected that the Pope would express strong reservations about this new development:

"'Because all creation belongs to God, it must not be manipulated for business purposes,' Pope John Paul II said.

"In an apparent reference to cloning, the Pope said 'dangerous experiments' which show a lack of respect for life are modern signs of people turning their desire for power or money into a god. During a March 2 address, he spoke about Christ driving the sellers and money changers out of the temple.

"'The zeal and love of Jesus for his Father's house certainly is not limited to a temple of stone,' the Pope said. 'It is the whole world which belongs to God and must not be profaned.'

"Making a whip out of chords and chasing out those who were doing business in the temple, 'Christ puts us on guard against the temptation to "market" even religion.'

"'Christ raises his voice also against the "temple merchants" of our time, against those who make the market their "religion," going so far as to trample — in the name of the "power god" or the "money god" — the dignity of the human person with abuses of every type,' the Pope said.

"Respect for life is sacrificed to money or power in modern experiments, ecological pollution, the marketing of sex, drug pushing and in the exploitation of children, he said.

"After the cloning of an adult sheep in Scotland, a Vatican official strongly warned against any attempt to duplicate the experiment on a human.

"Bishop Elio Sgreccia, the Vatican expert on medical ethics, said even animal cloning should be subject to strict ethical guidelines to maintain respect for the integrity of the various species created by God.

"The Pope also explained that Ten Commandments were designed for the good of individuals and of the human family."

A new ecumenism

The coming general council of the United Church will have to deal with a document called "Mending the World: An Ecumenical Vision for Healing and Reconciliation." According to* The Observer *of March 1997 it asks the church "to make common cause" with those of other faiths, or no faith, who want to care for creation. Under the heading, "One world, one people, one cause" the article outlines what is involved in this new ecumenism.

"The document makes its case simply for joining with people of good will. Out of its long ecumenical history, the United Church is used to joining forces with others for justice and healing. The world is in serious trouble. God loves the world, and wants it restored to order and beauty. And whenever humans try to help with that healing, we participate in Jesus' own 'passionate love and service toward both God and humanity.'

"The tone of the document is urgent. 'The tragedies of Chernobyl and Bhopal,' it says, 'of hydrofluorocarbons and oil taker spills, as well as other expressions of human error, have scarred people and the planet. How much longer this maltreatment can be sustained is anybody's guess. The signs are clear that without a change in behavior, humankind may not be long for this world.'

"The document is striking in the humility of its stance toward other faiths and secular institutions. 'Christians have to be prepared to grow,' it says, 'and possibly change their minds about some things, in the process of dialogue and partnership.'

"Similarly, it refuses to 'adjudicate' among different opinions about salvation. Does salvation come only through faith in Jesus Christ? Or is God's grace present in other religious traditions? Or does God have a specific covenant with Jews, and another with Christians, and another with Hindus, and so on? We will have to think through....

"The writers are unambiguous, however, about some things. 'The church is united in its affirmation that God has reconciled the world.' And God 'may well be encountered in the wisdom and loving spirit of others.'"

Social involvement of evangelicals

Faith Today *is the bi-monthly magazine of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Under the stimulating editorship of Brian Stiller it has become a strong voice for the evangelical cause in Canada. The March/April issue contains relevant articles about several contemporary issues, among them a cover story on social justice. One of the writers on this subject is Don Posterski, who has this to say on the involvement of evangelicals in the struggle for social justice:*

"In the past 10 years evangelicals have been more prominent in the public forum than in previous decades. In proactively seeking to influence public policy, funding an assortment of court interventions, and gaining access to the mainstream media, evangelicals have developed a public presence. Evangelicals have both the right and the responsibility to be participants in public decision making.

"When it comes to influencing public policy through financial support and personal involvement in political parties, polls indicate that evangelicals are more outsiders than insiders. Evangelicals are rarely connected enough to personally access political decision makers and exert relational influence.

"Using biblical imagery, rather than being like yeast and affecting the whole from the inside, evangelicals are more like long-distance laser lights that try to penetrate and influence from the outside. This light often appears to political decision makers as if it comes out of nowhere and quickly disappears, so they are tempted to dismiss it. There are better long-term strategies.

"Still, it is encouraging that the polls also reveal a disposition among evangelical church attenders to extend beyond their church buildings and to be more involved in the life of their communities.

"Evangelicals are biblical people. The future could well be determined by the biblical weight that evangelical pastors and leaders give to the various biblical passages that speak of social action and saving souls.

"Whether or not evangelicals increasingly become a force in the public arena will be determined by whether or not we stick with our favorite texts or become more biblically comprehensive and therefore more biblically balanced."

God's truth

A totally different view about the truth of the Christian faith was expressed in* The Pioneer, *the voice of the Regional Synod of Canada of the Reformed Church in America (RCA).

In the February issue, Jim Moerman, the executive secretary of the Regional Synod of Canada, decries the fact that in our time "the truth of Christ is exchanged for the truth of modern culture":

"Contrary to public opinion, we do NOT discover truth by taking opinion polls and conducting surveys. We do NOT discover truth by examining our feelings or taking a democratic vote. Neither can we discover truth by investigating the Book of Church Order. We discover truth by 'rightly dividing' (understanding) the Book of God's Order, the Holy Bible.

"We live in a remarkable and exceedingly strange day when Christians — by the score — write books and publish articles and pass motions at meetings without any biblical reference or appeal whatsoever. Read it and weep, but many (dare I say most?) overtures to general synod do not have a single Scriptural citation. To what, I ask, are we appealing? Logic? Opinion? Feelings? Political correctness? Even sermons are being preached with the Holy Scriptures treated like national anthems at sporting events — sounded at the beginning, but never heard from again.

"Truth is not about personal insight or intuition. God's truth revealed in the Bible is objective, public and authoritative, culminating in the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We don't find ultimate truth inside ourselves or in our religious neighbors; we find it in the historical self-revelation of God: the Holy Bible.

"Biblical faith is unique ... because it is not a matter of personal perception, but of fact. It's not simply about inner experience but about objective facts of history. It is history, His Story!

So we don't need any hand-wringing analyses of other religions to see whether they've got more truth than we do. And we don't want the easy welcoming of other religions in our midst as 'fellow travellers.' And we don't want the idea that God is found within private experience that each individual must interpret for himself or herself. And we could do without another sermon, moral lesson, or 'Bible study' that doesn't have much to do with the Bible.

"It's *truth* we must be after, God's truth, biblical truth, true Truth! God's truth must surely mark our consistory meetings, our decisions, our worship, our sermons, our priorities, our lives."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Brampton, Ont., where he works part-time as a chaplain in Holland Christian Homes.

Books

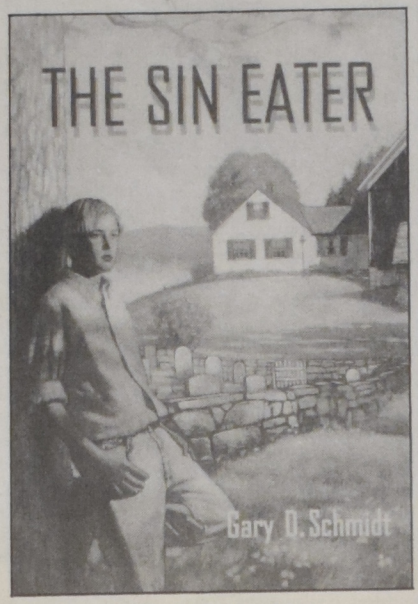
Calvin prof's first novel a young person's guide to Grace

Marian Van Til

The Sin Eater

By Gary D. Schmidt.

New York: Lodestar Books; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996. ISBN 0-525-67541-8. 184 p.; $15.99 (US), $22.99 (Cdn).



Gary Schmidt teaches and writes about children's literature and New England lore in the English department at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. *The Sin Eater* is his first novel. Set in New Hampshire and told from the point of view of a boy on the cusp of adolescence, the novel aptly draws from both of Schmidt's specialties.

As one might guess from its title, this is no slick, shallow read for teenagers which masquerades as literature. (There's plenty of that around.) *The Sin Eater* is, however, highly readable; that's not because it adopts some formula plot that young readers are supposed to relate to, but because it doesn't.

Schmidt does not for a second underestimate his youthful audience's potential for intelligence and thoughtfulness, which is why the book is also appealing to adults (there are elements in the book which will, perhaps, be fully appreciated only by adults).

Questions related to parent-child relationships, to faith, to loss and to community and family histories rise easily out of the story, lending themselves naturally to be pondered by adults and older children or teenagers together. The book's Christian message of Grace is not overtly pasted onto the plot, but arises subtly and integrally from it (for some readers, no doubt too subtly).

Schmidt's style is at once vivid and spare, capturing perfectly the essence of New England and its Puritan-descended souls. His descriptions — of Albion, N.H., the small farming community at the hub of the story, of the idiosyncratic characters who make up this community, of how people feel, and how they react to other characters and events — are distinct and fresh, and very often funny.

Taking the sins of others

"Sin eaters" come from Welsh lore and tradition. A sin eater was a person who could absorb the sins of others, resulting in their healing (sometimes physical, most often emotional and spiritual). A sin eater also ingested the sins of those who had recently died. He was a marginal figure who lived on the edge of a community, often feared and even despised, but his redemptive powers desperately needed.

Schmidt's prologue describes it, using the voice of Cole, the boy whose story the book tells:

The Sin Eater followed hurt and death. If it was hurt, the kind of hurt that wounded the soul, then the Sin Eater came by night to collect the bread left as an offering to him. Its yeast was the pain of the baker. The Sin Eater took it, silently, into himself.

But if it was death, mourning families summoned the Sin Eater from the edge of the wilderness to eat the bread kneaded through and through with the sins of their dear one, bread still warm with its baking, placed by a loving hand on the chest of the corpse. And when the Sin Eater took the loaf and ate it, no one gave him thanks and no one wanted to remember him. They threw a coin, then stones, until he ran, carrying his awful load of someone else's sin, coming at last to the wild, lonely place he lived.

Behind him, the Sin Eater left dancing and singing....

The Sin Eater as a kind of Christ figure is unmistakable to a Christian reader, though the story itself (wisely, I think) never draws the conclusion. There are also allusions to Communion and its effects as a means of grace.

Not just Cole's story

Those elements are expertly woven into the Cole's story. Cole Emerson Hallett and his dad move to New Hampshire from Pennsylvania after Cole's mother dies, to live with her parents, Cole's grandparents. We, along with Cole, then become immersed in rural New England life, the lives the Emersons and their ancestors, the Gealys, Cottrells, Pastor Hurd and his family, and various individuals.

Cole's loneliness is assuaged by these familial and communal ties, including a wonderful friendship he develops with two other boys. When he faces a further tragedy, his new understanding of his mother's family and their faithful integrity — "where he has come from" — help him come to terms with his life, and his parents' lives.

Families tell who we are

Schmidt has told interviewers he is interested in "how stories determine who we are" (*The Calvin Spark*, Spring 1997) and why people tell stories about themselves and their extended families when they get together for special occasions. *The Sin Eater* adeptly demonstrates that very human longing for familial fellowship, and makes us glad Schmidt let us in on the tale of these families. Though the setting may be dissimilar, in the end we see they're not so different from ourselves.

Poet's verses on Ruth flower into dance production

Roxanne Rupke

LONDON, Ont. — Agnes Kramer-Hamstra knows that Dutch people are not very light on their feet. "We Reformed people have a rich understanding of the Bible and our Christian faith, but our bodies are so tight," she says, laughing.

That's why Hamstra's recent foray into the world of dance has been blessed by the involvement of Christians from many backgrounds.

Hamstra began writing a collection of poems based on the book of Ruth last August. The poems led to a dance production called "Refuge in a Dangerous Time," which was performed on Friday, March 21, in St. Justin's Church in London, Ont.

Christians from various denominations constituted the dance troupe, the London-based Celebration Dance Company. Director Anna Douthwright, who choreographed the dances, is Roman Catholic.

In Hamstra's role as co-producer she had the opportunity to share with other Christians a story which was quite unfamiliar to many of them. "Many Christians don't know the Scriptures," she says. She compares the production experience to the medieval morality plays which enacted biblical stories so that people who couldn't read could understand.

'Best Bible story'

Hamstra calls the story of Ruth "the best story in the Bible." Her adaptation of the book portrays Ruth as a Christ figure who takes a great risk — "becoming a stranger in a strange land" — out of selfless love. Boaz, in the production, is a rich and powerful man who chooses to use his wealth and position for the poor because he fears God — he has heard about Ruth, and he "honors her for what she has done."

COURTESY AGNES KRAMER HAMSTRA

A scene from "Refuge in a Dangerous Time"

In the Ruth story, Hamstra finds powerful implications for today. Ruth, she says, is like a Palestinian in modern-day Israel. Gleaning in a modern context may mean collecting welfare as a single mother, Hamstra asserts. The title itself, "Refuge in a Dangerous Time," also applies: " Those living in poverty today know what it means to be at the mercy of leaders."

The dances are choreographed to music recorded by violinist Itzhak Perlman and gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, and by a Jewish klezmer band (among others) which performed live at the show.

Hamstra began to fully appreciate the book of Ruth during the summer of 1995 when she spent all her time studying and researching the story. At the end of the summer she preached a sermon on Ruth at the London church she attends.

Hamstra works as a librarian at Masonville Public Library in London. She recently published the poems which are choreographed in "Refuge in a Dangerous Time" with the help of a friend in Toronto, Peter Enneson. The volume is available by contacting her.

"Refuge in a Dangerous Time" could be performed again, by any dance group or class, according to Hamstra. The show is one hour and 15 minutes long and requires about 40 performers.

After the March 21 performance Hamstra said fervently, "It is really a thrill to see the story moved off the page and onto the stage."

Repentence fuels spiritual renewal and reform in Colombia

MEDELLIN, Colombia (EP) — "Please forgive us. Forgive us for the drugs that we've sold and the crimes that we've committed," read a note from prison, sent and signed by men who formerly worked for Pablo Escobar, leader of the Medellin Cartel. Although guilty of countless atrocities, several have now become followers of Jesus Christ. A crowd attending the final night of the Alberto Mottesi crusade held in March heard the letter read by Marta Estrada, an ex-drug trafficker who found Christ while serving a prison term in the United States.

Strong emotion

It was a night filled with strong emotions; dozens of Colombian flags waved and hundreds of balloons with the country's colors filled the sky. Before 50,000 people wedged into the Parque San Antonio, Estrada asked forgiveness in the name of Colombia for selling drugs in countries represented by the evangelistic team. "Forgive us, Argentina..., Mexico..., Puerto Rico..., Dominican Republic..., for the wrong we've brought you...." At the same time, members of the team asked forgiveness for the sins of their respective countries.

During the week-long evangelistic crusade, 1,900 Colombian women gathered for meetings. While 90 per cent admitted to no previous contact with the church, many gave their lives to the Lord. Some 2,000 church workers, including pastors, Sunday school teachers, women's and youth leaders attended a three-morning leadership seminar. One night of the crusade saw 25 criminals commit their lives to Christ. Another highlight came when a paralytic woman began to walk; someone nearby held her abandoned wheelchair aloft.

"This historic crusade is the door to a series of vital reforms for our city," says Pastor Basilio Patino, president of the crusade's organizing committee.

"God is visiting Colombia," agreed Mottesi, known in Latin America for his crusades, ministry to governors and radio and television outreach.

One Easter by 2001?

GENEVA, Switzerland (EP) — The World Council of Churches hopes to forge an agreement between the world's major Christian traditions on the date of Easter. Both eastern and western churches calculate Easter using the formula laid down by the Council of Nicea in 325, fixing the date on the first full moon following the March equinox. But because the traditions use different calculations for the equinox and the full moon, Easter winds up being held on two different days.

The council proposes that starting in 2001, the date of Easter should be set using modern astronomical calculations, and using Jerusalem as the fixed reference point for measurements.

Church makes effort to welcome the disabled

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is making a special effort to welcome people with disabilities into its churches. The denomination is widely distributing a booklet titled "That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities." That's just the first step in a plan by the denomination's Board of Church Extension (BCE) to help local congregations reach out to disabled people.

"Today there are more than 49 million Americans with a physical, sensory or mental disability," said BCE president James L. Powell. "A growing number are members of our congregations, a fact we hear regularly as we consult with our churches about their increased need for program access and leadership opportunities. Our common goal is to provide people with disabilities an opportunity to share their gifts with the church."

Cultivating a humble heart

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

"For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Luke 14:11

I have a friend — I'll call her Ann — who is a great comic actress. She can make any audience anywhere laugh, without ever saying a word. But Ann doesn't only perform when she's on stage; she performs all the time.

Recently I was watching her get onto a bus. She took an exaggerated step up into the slightly elevated bus entrance. She made the bus driver look at her, and smiled at him to include him in her joke. I realized that wherever Ann is, she presumes people are watching. She is always expecting to be the centre of attention, always the focus of her own concentration.

I have another friend — I'll call him Andy — who is also a great performer. He can mimic anyone anytime. He finds humor in situations which exasperate most people; he can make those around him relax and join in the laughter. He can also elicit amazing confidences from people in the course of casual conversation, even people he has just met.

Recently Andy and I were sitting in a restaurant when I found myself distracted by the fact that he was drumming on his face in an odd way. I realized that he was completely unaware of this idiosyncrasy. He was thinking about our conversation and had no thought of how he might appear to anyone else.

Self allows no room for God

I think it's no coincidence that of all my friends, Ann is probably the most hostile toward God (though she would never admit that); and of all my friends, Andy is probably the most constantly in communion with God (though he would never claim that). Ann never, ever forgets herself. Andy rarely thinks of himself at all. Ann has no room in her life for a transcendent being. Andy's life is full of God.

In *Mere Christianity* C.S. Lewis has a chapter on "The Great Sin" in which he discusses pride and humility. He points out that God wants us to be humble so that we will be free to know him, since a preoccupation with our own dignity will always be something which separates us from knowing God.

This isn't because God himself is proud, but because "in God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself." It is not possible to cling to a sense of our own importance while honestly confronting God in his true nature.

But that doesn't mean that being humble requires us to constantly think ill of ourselves Lewis explains:

Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call "humble" nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you *said to* him. *If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.*

That sounds like Andy to me. But for Ann, and for many others, their pride is rooted in a deep insecurity which requires that they constantly monitor both themselves and other people's reactions to them.

Another friend confessed to me recently that she often observes her own life as if it were a movie of which she is the star, or a novel of which she is the heroine. She narrates her life to herself, finding significance in each detail.

A full-time job

As she talked I realized that I did the same thing when I was very young, but not now. Humility does not come naturally to me, but at least as I grow older I have ceased to worry all the time about how I'm perceived. God has taught me that how I'm seen by others is really not that important.

I am not like Ann. But neither am I like Andy. The only path to self-forgetfulness like Andy's is to become absorbed in the One who is infinitely greater than myself. True humility is ground not in knowing myself to be unworthy, but in a true knowledge of the God who is in every respect far more than I could ever ask or imagine. Knowing him should be a full-time job which leaves no time for self-absorption.

So next time Andy drums on his face while we're sitting in a restaurant, or wanders off down the street without being sure where he's going, I promise not to roll my eyes or laugh indulgently. For he is one whom God has promised to exalt, and I need to learn humility from him.

Laura Smit is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) currently doing doctoral work in philosophical aesthetics at Boston University, Boston, Mass.

English Pro-lifers get TV time

LONDON, England (EP) — Pro-life activists in England have gathered enough candidates for political office to be granted national television time in the upcoming British election.

The Pro-Life Alliance says it hopes to use its five minutes to present footage of unborn babies killed through abortion.

Spokesperson Jonathan Stephens said, "Our aim is not to use shock tactics, just to reveal the truth of the situation. We want to campaign on the reality of what happens in an abortion." Any party which fields 50 candidates earns a five-minute television slot under British election rules.

Schaller observes the CRC

Jessie Schut

Lyle Schaller is a man on a mission, and he'll take every opportunity to share his observations with interested parties. Even after two days of non-stop travel and speaking, the energetic septuagenarian was still ready to honor his commitment to give CC readers his observations about the Christian Reformed Church.

Schut: The Christian Reformed Church ... is still regarded as an ethnic church. That can create barriers to reaching out. How do we overcome our ethnic identity?

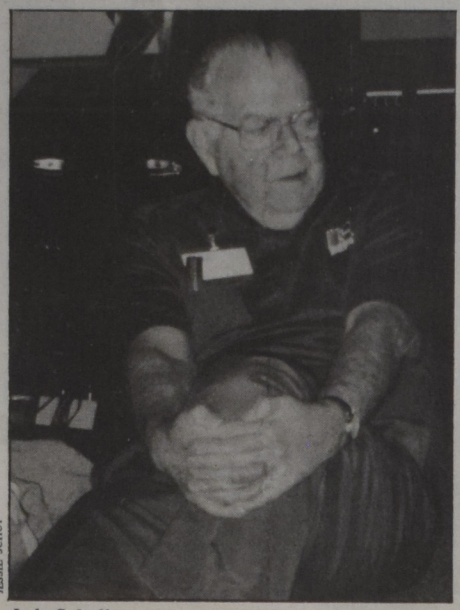
Schaller: Traditionally, four factors effect ethnic identity. Time, of course, is the first. The second is church mergers. We saw that happening in my own denomination, the United Methodists, when German, Swedish, Afro-American and other ethnic strains merged to form a new denomination. The third is war — a Canadian war against the Netherlands would motivate you to become more Canadian! The last factor, nationalism, is also important. In your denomination, the Canadian churches are trying to show that they're not the same as the churches south of the border, and that struggle identifies you as more Canadian than Dutch.

Schut: [Some of us] worry that with our efforts to reach out we may be in danger of losing our strengths. How do we reach out without "dumbing down"?

Schaller: This is a very important point. You have made, and will make, trade-offs as you become more North American and less Dutch. You have some very distinctive strengths. You should absolutely avoid being just a generic Christian denomination; you need to have a Reformed basis as the basis of doctrine and polity, and any watering down of that you should think twice about. The generic Christians aren't doing that well.

Schut: What do you see as a strength?

Schaller: The CRC has been and still is a much higher-expectation church than a lot of churches, and I would be most anxious about the "watering down" of expectations. I remember once visiting a CRC pastor for some information. I came to see him at 2 p.m. on a Monday; he was very co-operative. Then I asked him, "What was your attendance yesterday?" and he became agitated. He said, "We had 92 out of 95 families attending yesterday." Then he got real agitated. And he said, "Now two of those families that weren't there, I know why they didn't attend, but the third one, well, here it is 2 o'clock Monday and I still don't know why they didn't come."



JESSIE SCHUT

Lyle Schaller

The implication was, if I wasn't there, he'd be doing his work, finding out why I wasn't. He was very clear: we expect every family to be in church, unless you are out of town or sick.

In many ways you are a much higher expectation church [than most] in what you expect from your members in attendance, participation and giving. Your ministry shares alone, per family, are higher than what other denominations expect in total giving. You do a very adequate job of communicating to people what the needs are, and expecting them to give for that. And people respond.

Schut: Explain how you see us being strong in polity.

Schaller: I think you [the CRC] made a very wise choice when you said, "Let's get [the women in office issue] off the national agenda, and leave it up to the classis." The national agenda of a church should be the Great Commission — that's what your synod should deal with.

In my view, what we have here is the difference between a cultural question and a doctrinal question, and I think that issue is a cultural question. Your cultural, polity questions need to stay as close to the folks as you can. Your doctrinal issues are for the national assembly to deal with.

Schut: But some people think that this issue shows that the church is becoming too "liberal."

Schaller: The simplest clearest, response to that question is another question: "What is the agenda of the national church?" and the answer should be, "The Great Commission, or helping local churches fulfill the Great Commission." That's the beginning and the end of the paragraph. There's only so much time and energy that you have, and if you spend it chasing rabbits — arguing over issues — there's less for the Great Commission.

The classis has the responsibility of overseeing congregations, and this is good, don't misunderstand me on this. You ought to trust your classis. In a sense you become a federation of classes, and the federation's job is the Great Commission.

Schut: Wouldn't this be a different way of ruling the church?

Schaller: The European system of Christianity, in which you have your roots, is based on the assumption you cannot trust local leadership. American evangelical Christianity [believes] you can. This is a bottom-up rather than top-down style of management. Look at the numerically fastest growing churches and what do you find? Those which trust local leadership.

There are, of course, other factors that enter in, but that's one way of looking at things. From my point of view, the distinctive difference lies in the word *trust*. If you want to be Canadian and Reformed, you need to trust local leadership.

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Niagara's Butterfly Conservatory: a tropical paradise far from the madding crowd

PHOTO: MARIAN VAN TIL

Marian Van Til

There's a new tourist attraction in the Niagara region on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. It's attracting long line-ups and much word-of-mouth, "you've-gotta-see-this" advertising. No, it's not a new helicopter ride; or the world's largest, tackiest souvenir shop; it's not even Casino Niagara (though that is attracting lines-up of a different clientele). It is the 11,000-square-foot Butterfly Conservatory run by the Niagara Parks Commission; it opened on Dec. 14, 1996.

Entering the conservatory is like walking into a lovely bit of rain forest. The damp air is heavy with earth and plant smells, and the sound of falling water is ubiquitous. Sprinklers mounted on tall poles shoot out mist which sparkles in the sunlight invading the greenhouse-like roof and walls.

Butterflies of an amazing number of sizes, shapes, colors and markings fill the air. They flit among the trees and dense walls of plants; or light on the dishes of sliced tropical fruits. Some briefly congregate *en masse* near a particular palm tree; or hover near the netting which surrounds the high glass walls and ceiling. One rests momentarily on a flower, another on a handrail, another on someone's shoulder, another — at its peril — on the stone pathway which winds up, down and around the carefully placed rocks, greenery, waterfall and pool.

Immigrants from the tropics

At any given time there are nearly 2,000 butterflies in the conservatory, representing 40 to 50 species, says entomology technician Cheryl Tyndall. (Entomology is a branch of zoology which deals with insects — and butterflies *are* insects, though when we think "insects," the beautiful side of the family doesn't often come to mind.) Tyndall is in charge of the breeding program and of receiving and inspecting the shipments of new butterflies that come in two or three times a week.

Most of the conservatory butterflies are natives of the tropics. Thus, a small weekly shipment comes from Florida, and most of the others come from Costa Rica, the Philippines or El Salvador. They are not taken from the wild but are grown on "ranches" in those countries, says Tyndall. "It's a great cottage industry for some of the poor people there. They grow them, then bring them to a central distributor" who pays them for their efforts.

The butterflies aren't actually butterflies yet when they get to the conservatory. Each week from 1,000 to 1,400 pupae arrive, of which 75 to 80 per cent survive. That's considered a very good success rate — a far better survival rate than in nature.

A few species "are not great emergers," says Tyndall. "Fifty per cent [of those species] don't emerge. It's estimated that overall, five per cent of butterfly eggs laid [in the wild] actually hatch a mature butterfly!"

The pupae are inspected when they arrive and the viable ones are carefully pinned on boards so they can hatch. Some are placed in the display window where the public can watch them wriggle out of their cocoons. A few are placed in enclosed, oblong Rubbermaid containers because they need humidity "at swamp levels" — 100 per cent, says Tyndall.

While a butterfly pupa is in its crysalis it doesn't consume food. "It's undergoing a breakdown of cell material to change into a butterfly," Tyndall explains. "That's probably why butterflies are such an obvious religious symbol."

Two brief weeks of glorious beauty

The average lifespan among species from egg to pupation is 21 days; and then the average butterfly (if any such creature can be called "average"!) lives for two weeks. Some live up to three months; a few hearty creatures as long as six months. That brief lifespan makes those twice and thrice weekly shipments of new butterflies understandable.

Some of the species you might see on recurring visits differ from one visit to the next. The species change as seasons change. "The season is changing here right now, but it's also changing in the tropics," says Tyndall. The changes are evident every two weeks. In the last weeks, nine new species have been introduced to the conservatory.

The conservatory hatches about 1,000 of its own butterflies a month to augment its foreign shipments. So far, the conservatory has chosen just three species to breed (only two of which are "in production"): the zebra longwing (Heliconius charitonius), the postman (Heliconius erato), and the monarch. Later they'll be breeding swallowtails and "owls" of various types.

When I asked Cheryl Tyndall if its true that monarchs eat only milkweed (thus their increasing rarity in populated areas), she explained that, yes, most butterfly species "eat very specific plant material; they're choosy." The zebra longwing's meal of choice, for instance, is the passion vine.

Just a 'pretty' face

The butterflies actually have some live-animal company besides themselves here — that is, besides the aphids, white flies and other plant-munchers and disease-causers that must be controlled without pesticides or insecticides so they don't chomp and wither the plants to

oblivion.

Those other air-breathing occupants are two iguanas named Luther and Grinch. This cold-blooded duo is on display strictly for their, uh, "pretty faces" — "just for interest," says Tyndall, as they don't feed on plant pests. Rather, they themselves pig out on plants, in this case squash, carrots and snowpeas fed specifically to them by obliging conservatory employees.

Visitors who came by shortly after the conservatory opened might have seen several tiny button quail hopping around among the plant stalks, gobbling up those aforementioned nasty plant pests. They did a fine job, too, but were attracted to the water. Unfortunately, though, quails can't swim. So they'd fall into the pool, flounder around, and were fortunate to be noticed by an interpreter and rescued. After that happened three times it was decided that perhaps quail weren't the best solution to pest control.

"We're looking at the possibility of other birds," says Tyndall. The top candidate is the white eye, a tiny nectar feeder that likes aphids and white flies too. They would come from France later this spring.

Several assistants help Cheryl Tyndall with her behind- the-scenes work. And four full-time and two part-time "interpreters" station themselves around the conservatory to answer visitors' questions. They also take tickets and direct people to where they need to go, including to the video room where a seven- or eight-minute orientation video sets the stage for stepping into the conservatory itself.

Two horticultural technicians maintain all the reserve plant material in the adjoining 7,000-square-foot greenhouses, and they take care of the plants in the conservatory.

Comeliness in any season

The idea for an indoor butterfly conservatory along the Niagara Parkway, six miles downriver from the Falls on the beautiful, quieting grounds of the Niagara Parks Commissions' Horticultural School and Botanical Gardens, surfaced about 10 years. But it was only three years ago that the decision was made to go ahead with the project. The result is the largest glass-enclosed butterfly conservatory anywhere.

As final construction nears completion, an outdoor butterfly garden will emerge in time for the hordes of warm-weather visitors to Niagara Falls.

The outdoor butterfly area will be meant not only to delight visitors, but to get those who live locally, or in a climate similar to that of the Niagara region, to grow in their own gardens and backyards the kind of plants that attract native butterflies: purple coneflower, milkweed (asclepias), black-eyed Susan (rudbeckia), and butterfly bush (buddleia), to name a few basics.

The wonderful thing about the Butterfly Conservatory is that it has something to offer in every season. My husband, Ed, and I first visited on New Year's Day. It was a grey day, cold and damp, and we were both feeling rather lethargic and a little depressed. The conservatory was a world apart. Its colorful flying occupants and exquisite plant life chased away those negative feelings promptly, and put a song of praise to our Creator on our lips instead.

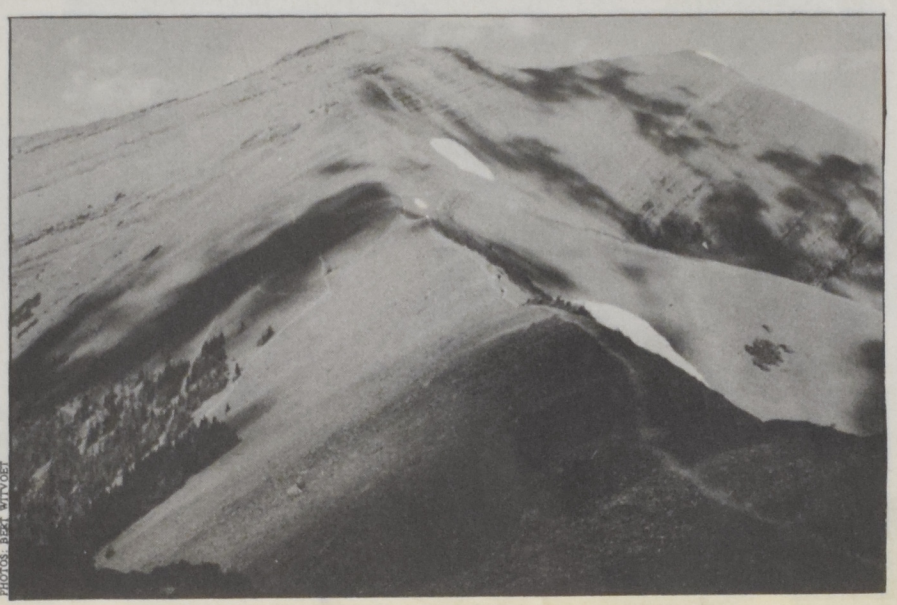
In the warm-weather seasons visitors will have a somewhat different experience. In addition to the conservatory they'll be able to take in the loveliness of the outdoor butterfly garden, and if they choose, as well, the striking flower gardens and quiet tree-lined paths of the spacious grounds of the Botanical Gardens.

The conservatory is attracting an average of 12,000 people a week; it has seen 200,000 visitors since its mid-December opening. To avoid the long lines that have been forming as word of the conservatory has spread, timed ticket sales are being contemplated. A patron would then be able to buy a ticket for entrance at a specific time and plan to do other things in the meantime.

Visiting hours will also be extended, to 8 p.m. next month, and to 9 p.m. for the summer. Current hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Regular adult admission is $6 — a real bargain for an uncommon experience.

Vacation Feature

Visit Waterton Lakes Park at least once before you die



PHOTOS: BERT WITVOET

Our last hike led us to the top ridge of Mount Carthew.

Bert Witvoet

Last summer my wife and I and some of our adult children treated ourselves to a unique camping and hiking experience in the most southern parts of the Canadian Rockies. Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta is one of the best kept secrets among national parks, I believe. When I asked a local librarian about some material on the park, she concluded that it was not one of the major parks, "obviously" because she had never heard of it.

Actually, Waterton Lakes is part of the International Peace Park — it borders Glacier National Park in the U.S. Shortly after the state of Montana created Glacier National Park in 1910, the Canadian government got its act together and set aside 525 square kilometres of land for a national park. After much lobbying from Rotary International members of both sides of the border, the Canadian and U.S. governments agreed to establish Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, the first of its kind in the world. The parks are administered separately, but they co-operate in preserving the pristine mountain wilderness environment they share.

Unsophisticated facilities

As far as our family is concerned, one of the attractive features of Waterton Lakes is that it is so little known and not at all commercialized like Banff and Jasper. Just take a stroll through the little town of Waterton and you'll know what I mean. There are no banks. And only one store will give you money through your credit card so that you can pay other local merchants. One small grocery store, or should I say glorified variety store, provides the only source of uncooked foods. And there are very few foreign tourists visible in the streets and shops.

Waterton was never hooked up to a railway line, unlike Banff and Jasper, so it never drew large crowds of tourists. The Great Northern Railway did operate a bus service from its Montana rail line to Jasper, with a stop at Waterton Lakes. This led to the construction of the Prince of Wales Hotel, which sits on a terrace of glacial debris (a kame) jutting out into Upper Waterton Lake.

When we drove into the park, coming from Pincher Creek, we were faced with a choice between two campgrounds inside the park (a third one was closed). The one is right in town, and is little more than a grass field with parking room for recreational vehicles, though it has modern amenities like showers and electricity.

We decided against that sardine-can option since we planned to pop-up a trailer and pitch a tent as well. And we had in mind a 10-day long stay that would give us the feel of sleeping under the stars instead of streetlights and being surrounded by the sounds of nature instead of cars.

Crandell Campground, nestled between several mountains, is the other option inside the park. It has only 129 campsites, no electricity, no showers and no hot water. In other words, you have to sacrifice convenience to peace and freedom. The sites are roomy, especially the one we picked at the very end of the last loop. It was going to be a near-wilderness camping experience. A little creek ran behind our site and we were almost completely surrounded by mountains.

Beware of the bear

Rules are very strict in Crandell Campground. Anyone who leaves a campstove or cooler sitting around unattended runs the risk of having it confiscated. Park authorities have to be that strict because many bears live nearby and may roam through the campsites. We witnessed a young male bear coming near our camp site several times.

One time, Alice and the kids were sitting next to the creek, reading their books and magazines. I was taking a nap in the trailer. Suddenly our son John came running to the trailer and woke me up with the urgent "Dad, get your camera, there's a bear at the creek!"

What had happened was that a bear had come ambling along the trail on which the various members of our family were lounging. It must have noticed them before they noticed it. Suddenly they heard a splash in the creek and they saw a bear running to the other side, with head partially turned their way. From fresh tracks in the sand we could tell later that he had gotten to about 10 feet from where the family was sitting before he made his dash to the other side of the creek. It all happened so fast that nobody had time to be afraid.

I did photograph this black bear.

The picture I took didn't turn out too well. It shows just a blur of blackness because I wanted to switch to a zoom lens as I was running down the incline to the creek and the normal lens would not let go of the camera. So by the time I took the picture the bear was disappearing into the shrubs. Sorry, folks, you'll just have to believe us on this one.

Good people, good bears

Of course, it is at times like this that you realize the wisdom behind the park's rules. The bears are not used to eating food brought by human beings. As long as you don't threaten them, they try to stay away from you. None of the park rangers were particularly alarmed about the fact that this young male bear passed through the campground from time to time. Their philosophy is that humans have to adjust to the bears and their natural habitat, not the other way around.

During the 10 days we were in the park, we saw dozens of bears, mostly sows and cubs. Most were black bears, which can be either black or brown, but some of them were grizzlies. We saw a grizzly mother and cub one day when we were out on one of the many trails that run through the park. You can tell a grizzly from a black bear by the hump on its neck and its dish-shaped face. We patiently waited until the pair disappeared, then we made sure we made noise as we continued. Bears will avoid you that way, we were told.

Hike till you drop

The park's trails are its key attractions. Although the park is relatively small, it has 255 kilometres of wilderness trails, most of them winding up and down the sides of mountains. If those aren't enough for you, you can go to neighboring Glacier National Park for another 1,200 kilometres-worth. If you're in fairly good shape, and apparently Alice and I were (it goes without saying that our kids were), you can negotiate the mountain trails with success. But be sure to take along sweaters for cool times and lots of water to prevent dehydration on the warm slopes.

We started out with a short hike the first day. It was the four kilometre treck from our campsite to and from Crandell Lake (see map p. 14). We fol-

lowed that up with an eight kilometre hike to Bertha Lake two days later, stopping at the lower Bertha Falls for lunch. Actually, it was on our return from the lower falls that we saw the grizzley mother and cub.

Hanging valley

Two days later we decided that we had to be a little more serious about hiking; we planned the 17.2 kilometre hike to and from Crypt Lake. That was a fantastic hike. It started with a short boat ride across Upper Waterton Lake. From there we set out to conquer the slopes of Vimy Ridge. The trail switch-backs for 2.5 km past a series of waterfalls (don't you love the jargon? switch-backs are zigzag trails that enable you to climb a steep slope). Let me quote a tourist guidebook entitled *Alberta and the Northwest Territories Handbook* for a vivid description:

"The final ascent to Crypt Lake from the campground causes the most problems, especially for those who suffer from claustrophobia. A ladder on the cliff leads into a natural tunnel that you must crawl through on your hands and knees. The next part of the trail is along a narrow precipice with a cable for support. [See picture this page]. The lake at the end of the trail, nestled in a hanging valley is no disappointment. Its dark green waters are rarely free of floating ice, and the steep walls of the cirque rise over 500 meters above the lake on three sides."

Well, its' all true, folks. We negotiated the tunnel and precipice like mountain goats (of a certain age), and arrived at the "nestling" lake with great appetite. So the first thing we did was have lunch on a large rock jutting out into the ice-cold water. One of us actually skinny-dipped, but it wasn't me.

Then three of the more adventurous members of our family climbed the loose skree pile that led to a glacial crevice in the mountain, while the rest of us took to the lowly meadow dotted with wildflowers to engage in the more humble and safe activity of taking pictures and imbibing beauty.

Reluctant to leave

The wildflowers are gorgeous in this alpine region, by the way. We saw meadows with red Indian paintbrush, bright yellow daisies and purplish pink willow herbs. Oh, I should mention the bear-grass with its tall white spikes of blooms. Bear-grass is found in no other Canadian national park, I read. Guess who likes to eat this grass! No, not yours truly.

Of course, our family was the last to leave Shangri-La, partly because I liked the idea of not aging any further. We had to rush the return trip to make the last boat out, especially after we decided we needed to cool off our exhausted feet halfway down the mountain. A glacier-fed creek was just the ticket. There's time for everything in our family, except for being on time.

The next day definitely had to be a rest day. But that's what books and snacks are for. I think that's the day I took that much-needed nap when the bear showed up and our son came running to the camper shouting you-know-what.

On Mount Everest

The next day we took the queen bee of hikes. We figured if we could manage 17 kms before, we could do a 19 km one with the same elan. And we did.

We walked from Cameron Lake via Summit Lake to the top ridge of Mount Carthew 2630 metres (8628 feet) above sea level (See picture opposite page). What was different about this hike was that you do not return to the same place you started from. You had to drive to Cameron Lake to start, but you ended up in the town of Waterton. We managed a shuttle with two cars.

Did we ever enjoy this hike. Arriving at the narrow ridge was a highlight. Up there we seemed to be on top of the world. We leisurely consumed lunch behind a rock to shelter ourselves from the strong gusts that blow up there. We felt as if we had conquered Mount Everest. I didn't think this feat was too shabby either for a 62-year-old editor.

The trip down the other side seemed easy, somehow, with spectacular views of glaciers, lakes, cirques — and bear droppings. On our return to the village we treated ourselves to supper and frozen yoghurt.

Windy night

For the sake of honesty I shall mention the windstorm that kept us up most of one night. We were afraid the wind would rip the canvas apart or topple our trailer. It was a noisy and unsettling experience. It surely unraveled my idealist notion that Chinooks are always benign.

But when you balance that against the view of starry skies at night, unimpeded by city lights, and the clear blue Alberta skies during the day, you just plain forget about that little upheaval. Have I told you that a deer visited our fireplace from time to time, poking its nose in the ashes for peanut hulls? And we came across other animals, like marmots and mountain sheep.

But an even more wonderful thing was that you meet the nicest people in such wilderness settings, people who are open to the grandeur of God's creation. One of them was a Mennonite farmer from near Lethbridge. Another turned out to be a relative from Holland I had never met before.

DeVries, you say?

Discovering my relative started with an innocent conversation which betrayed the young man's Dutch accent. From there it went to the comment that he was from Friesland and had relatives in Lemmer.

"I do, too," I said nonchalantly. "My relatives are called DeVries." A stupid remark, when you think of it really. I mean, how many DeVrieses are there not in Holland, and how likely is it that he would know the ones I knew? Lemmer is a fair-sized city.

"My grandmother is a DeVries," he answered.

Okay, so she is, I thought. "What is your grandmother's name?" I asked for the fun of it. Once you step in you may as well see it through to the ridiculous end.

"Wabbe."

I pricked up my ears. There are not too many Wabbes around, I knew. "I have a Tante Wabbe," I said somewhat excitedly now. "What was her mother's name?"

"Sietske."

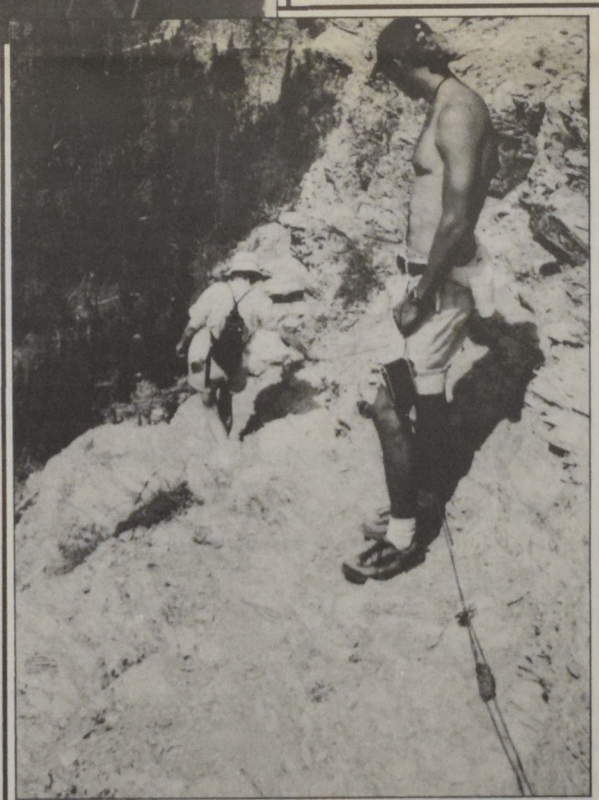
"My Tante Wabbe's mother was Sietske," I exclaimed. Both of us were staring at each other in disbelief now. We checked out other names, and they all fit. Amazing: here I was 2,000 miles from home and I meet the son of a second cousin who was, what, about 6,000 miles from his home? He and his wife had come here for a unique nature experience. They got more than they had bargained for.

Majesty and comfort

I won't attribute this serendipitous encounter to the virtues

Continued on page 14...

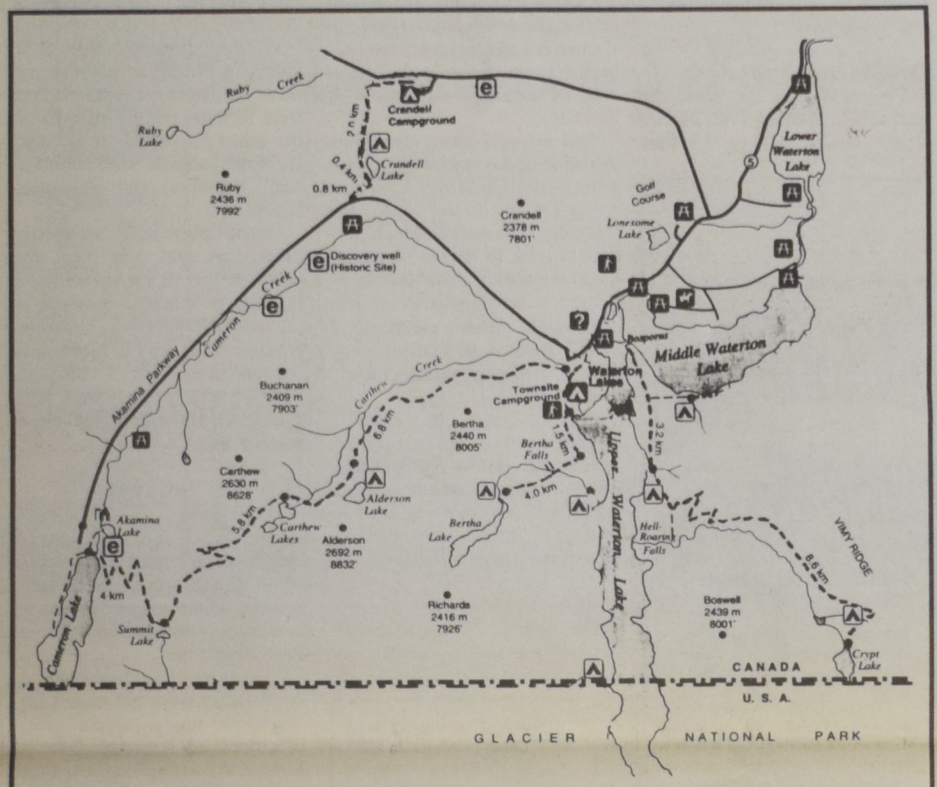
Camping on Crandell Campground.



A narrow precipice with cable near Crypt Lake.

Feature

Waterton Lakes Park



Dotted lines in this map show the hiking trails we took.

... Continued from p. 13

of Waterton Lakes National Park, although you never know how gene pools and glacial pools can form a mysterious connection.

But I will say this much for Waterton Lakes: if I lived in Alberta and had never visited this glorious park, I would hang my head in shame, fling my stetson to the ground and slink into the sunset. Or I would sell my plot of land and move to Ontario, where such wonders are not known and you would be excused for being such an ignoramus.

I mean, how can the C.N. Tower compare with the grandeur of Mount Carthew? And what's that frantically flowing downpour of water called Niagara Falls compared with the silent reflection of a stoic glacier in the deep-green water?

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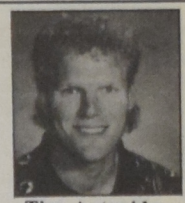
CC has new sports columnist

With this issue, Tim Antonides begins writing our sports column, now called "After the Buzzer." Tim is a Grade 5 teacher and coach at Surrey (B.C.) Christian School and a graduate of Dordt College. We're glad he'll be writing for us and wish him well. Check out his column. ➡

Sports

After the buzzer



Tim Antonides

Start by raising questions

A little change is often good. From time to time, we all need to fine-tune things in our lives when we hit snags. Large-scale changes, though, are tough to deal with. I need stability. I need to know that when I get up tomorrow, my world will be quite similar to the one I dozed off in.

Professional sports in the '90s is driving me up the wall. Why? It's not that the level of athletic excellence is getting lower. I think it's getting better, actually. And commercialized hype is nothing new; I'm almost used to it. What I'm having a hard time with is the way in which professional sports leagues are changing so fast. In fact, the word "league" is a misnomer. "Commodity exchange" might be a better term.

The NHL is a perfect example. It was not so long ago that the league had six solid Canadian teams, as well as their American counterparts. There was a decent balance of talent. As well, players would stay with the same team for an extended period of time. Fans developed a sense of loyalty.

Greed took over

Then what happened? The laws of the free market took over. Players started changing teams at a lightning pace. Big-money markets swallowed little ones. Teams from hockey meccas like Quebec City and Winnipeg left for Denver and Phoenix. We're at a point now where anyone and anything on two skates is for sale. This brings me back to *stability*. I can't keep up and I'm getting tired of trying (although being a Vancouver Canucks fan is enough to discourage anyone).

What is a Reformed Christian to think of all this? Giving up on professional sports is a cop-out. But frankly, I don't know what to do about the whole thing. It's a mess. It's not much different from the way in which small stores in our towns are being swallowed up by large chains like Wal-Mart and its cronies. It's the postmodern era of large corporations, global organizations and massive takeovers.

I suppose a start is to get our mindset straight. There is a proportion of sports fans who would say that the "survival of the fittest" approach is the only one. If a team can't afford to pay a certain player what he "deserves," he should go elsewhere. So too, a market (like Winnipeg) that can't afford a payroll like that of the Rangers shouldn't be in business. Of course. Good old-fashioned capitalism, right?

I'm tired of that attitude. What's more, Christians know better. Just as I think Christians should be tenacious and unshakable, they also need to show humility, moderation, and integrity. The Reformed vision of working within culture includes those Christians who work inside professional sports organizations. They need to be challenged to help put some equity and stability back into pro sports.

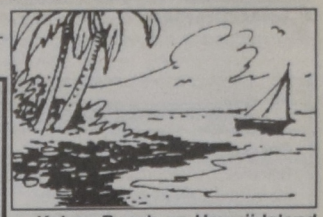
Voice in the wilderness

There needs to be a ceiling on what professional teams can spend on their payroll. By implementing this leagues could reduce the role that greed plays in enticing players to come to certain cities. Is it possible that professional athletes may then be more reflective in deciding whether or not to leave a team (if they have that option)? I think so.

Maybe it's a dream to think that the NHL, NFL, NBA, MBL, and others could maintain some semblance of balance and equality. I don't think it's impossible, though. More importantly, Christians can be a voice in the wilderness as they offer intelligent, discerning alternatives to the ominous downward spiral of pro sports. Raising the questions is where it starts.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 5 and coaches basketball at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

VACATION 1997



Kaimu Beach on Hawaii Island has glistening black sand which consists of grains of lava.

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Hosts: Marie, Christina & Craig, and Jonathan
(705) 383-2930

ISRAEL

Join this unique Fall tour to the Land of the Bible

11 exciting days
September 29 - October 9, 1997

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Mississauga, ON L5N 2L3

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Fax: (905) 542-0154; home: (905) 824-5074

LITTLE EUROPE RESORT and TRAILER PARK

Bracebridge, Muskoka

Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for its Dutch hospitality. Reasonable rates for cottage rentals. Excellent for camping, swimming and fishing (ideal for group camping). "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy. 11, on Hwy. 118 East, past the Muskoka Airport.

• No pets please • Showers available
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Little Europe Resort, R.R. 3, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X1
Phone: (705) 645-2738

For Rent

Completely furnished chalet in the Blue Mountain area. Living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, two 3-piece bathrooms. Beautiful view of the Beaver Valley and Georgian Bay.
$300 weekly/$150 weekends, plus GST.

Note: Before June 7, 1997, also available for weekends only (Friday till Sunday or Monday).

For more info. call Sake or Chelsey Dykstra at

(519) 599-3789 or write to:
Box 7, R.R. 2, Clarksburg, ON N0H 1J0

Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Travel

DCA Travel
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Toronto 416-224-5211
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1-800-667-2525
Fax 416-224-0842
Grimsby 905-945-3301
Burlington 905-522-8602
Emergency Service Available
Business & Vacation Travel

Anniversaries

Congratulations to William and Maria De Boer on their 60th wedding anniversary!

1937 May 8 1997

With praise and gratitude to the Lord we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

WILLIAM and MARIA DE BOER
(nee HOFING)

May God continue to bless them richly in their life together. Sincere love and best wishes from the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

You are invited to an open house D.V. on Saturday, May 3, 1997, from 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. in the fellowship room of the First Chr.Ref.Church, 10956 - 96 Street, Edmonton.

Best wishes only, please!

Home address: #825 - 11445 - 135 St., Edmonton, AB T5M 3M6.

1957 March 15 1997

God has graciously blessed our parents and grandparents

GEORGE and CORRIE HOOGHIEM (nee HELDER)

with 40 years of marriage.

We thank them for their example and love, and pray that God will continue to sustain them for each other and for us in the years to come.

With love from your children and grandchildren:

Annette & Henry Hartemink — Aylmer
Carrie, Denise, Katie, Melanie, Richard, Kendrick, Evan
Andre & Sylvia Hooghiem — Aylmer
Michael, Jeremy, Bradley, Nicole
Allen & Randee Hooghiem — Aylmer
Shandee, Craig, Jesse, Kristen
Evelina & Eric Hartemink — Belmont
Karen, Evelyn, Brenda, Cheryl, Deric

We invite you to attend an open house in their honor on Saturday, April 26, 1997, from 7 - 10 p.m. in the Chr.Ref.Church, corner of South & Caverly, Aylmer, Ont.

Best wishes only, please.

Home address: 322 John St., Aylmer ON N5H 2E2.

Anniversaries

1937 May 7 1997

"For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations." (Ps.100:5)

With joy and gratitude to the Lord for His care and faithfulness, we are happy to announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

TOM and HENNY ENNEMA
(nee HARTZEMA)

We pray that the Lord may continue to bless you and spare you for us and each other for many more years!

With love and congratulations from all of us:

Corry & Bill Veenstra
John & Marilyn Ennema
Kees & Shawnee Ennema
Hank & Mary Ennis
13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

We hope to celebrate together, D.V., as family and friends, on Saturday, May 10, 1997, with an open house from 2 - 4 p.m. at Harmony Hall, Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, Ont.

Home address: Holland Chr.Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd.S., H.T #304, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7.

1957 May 4 1997

We thank the Lord for the blessings and love granted to

JACOB and CONNIE PRANGER
(nee NYWENING)

As we celebrate with them their 40 years of marriage, we pray that the Lord will continue to bless you with many more years together, Mom & Dad.

Helen Pranger — Strathroy, Ont.
Harry & Wendy Pranger — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Lisa, Julie, Nicole
Dave & Marilyn Pranger — Strathroy, Ont.
David, Joshua, Marc
Jacqueline & Rick Bylsma — Strathroy, Ont.
Jason, Nicolis
Jack Pranger — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Kathleen & Len Burke — London, Ont.
Susan Pranger — Calgary, Alta.
Paul Pranger — at home.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path." (Ps.119:105).

The families of Jake & Connie Pranger invite friends and family to an open house at the East Chr.Ref.Church, 476 Metcalfe St.E., Strathroy Ont., on Saturday, May 3, 1997, from 2-4 p.m.

Please, only best wishes.

Home address:
4896 Egremont Drive, R.R.#1, Strathroy, ON N7G 3H3.

For Rent

For rent: One bedroom apartment. Private. No pets. Country living. Jordan/Vineland area.
Phone (905) 562-7464

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Wietze and Lamkje Vander Heide on their 60th wedding anniversary!

1937 May 14 1997

It's 60 years for Pake and Beppe.

It is with praise and thanksgiving to God that we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents

WIETZE and LAMKJE VANDER HEIDE
(nee KOOPS)

We pray Mom and Dad, Pake and Beppe, that God will continue to bless you.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

With love:

Helen & Ray Feenstra — Vauxhall, Alta.
Patricia & Henry Getkate — Belleville, Ont.
Richard & Loma Vander Heide — Coalhurst, Alta.
Trudy & Art Nieuwkerk — Brooks, Alta.
17 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Home address: P.O. Box 596, Picture Butte, AB T0K 1V0.

Teachers

BRESLAU, Ont.: Due to increased enrolment, **Woodland Chr. High School** is inviting applications for a possible opening for a teacher of

COMPUTER STUDIES

The successful applicant will guide the development of our computer studies program and the use of computers across the curriculum.

Please direct applications and inquiries to:

Gary VanArragon, Principal
Woodland Chr. High School
R.R. #1, Breslau, ON
N0B 1M0
Phone: (519) 648-2114
Fax: (519) 648-3402
E-mail: wchs@albedo.net

Anniversaries

Obituaries

Krewerd Edmonton
1913 1997

"With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation." (Ps.91:16).

On March 10, 1997, after a 22-year battle with heart disease,

JAN VAN NIEJENHUIS

age 83, went home to be with his Lord.

Dear husband, for 52 years, of Anje (nee Scheper).

Father of:

Bert & Erna van Niejenhuis — Neerlandia, Alta.
Cathy van Niejenhuis — Perth, W.Australia
Herm & Dee van Niejenhuis — North York, Ont.
Geri & Norm Mantel — Terrace, B.C.
Cec & Karen van Niejenhuis — Edmonton, Alta.
Monica & Ron Vanden Brink — Salmon Arm, B.C.
16 grandchildren.

Correspondence address: Anje van Niejenhuis, #206 Summit Village, 100th Ave.& 149th St., Edmonton, AB T5P 4V7 Tel.:(403) 454-6937.

Teachers

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Chr. School, a denominationally diverse community which offers Kindergarten through Grade 10, has **potential openings at several levels.** Please send your resume to:

Ron Donkersloot, Principal
Vancouver Chr. School
3496 Mons Drive
Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6
No applications by fax, please.

Classifieds

Obituaries

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever." (Ps.136:1).
The Lord saved Tony from a life of pain and disability after he suffered an accident in the D.R., by taking him home on April 6, 1997 in his 69th year.

ANTHONY WIELEMAKER

Dearly loved by his wife Hilda (nee Overdijk) and his children:
Marilyn & Gord Vreugdenhil
Curtis, David, Mark
Laura & Jack Roeleveld
James, Joel, Blair, Carl
Rena & Paul Hoornweg
Nicholas, Timothy, Maria, Benjamin
Ken & Eleanor Wielemaker
Monique, Anthony, Natalie, Leana
Beverly & Martin Boekee
Daniel, Rachel, Ken
Anthony Wielemaker
Lovingly remembered by many brothers and sisters and extended family in Canada, the Netherlands and Australia.
The service was at Ebenezer Chr.Ref.Church, Trenton, Ont., with Rev.R.Fisher officiating.
Correspondence address: 256 Broatch Rd. R.R.#3, Trenton, ON K8V 5P6 or hildaw@connect.reach.net

Teachers

EDMONTON, Alta.: Edmonton Society for Christian Education invites applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

The successful candidate will oversee the West campus of 380 students and a staff of 29. **This is a one year term position.**
We are looking for a candidate who will complement our staff and will affirm the mission statement of the society.
Please mail or fax your resume **before April 30, 1997,** to:
D. Bolink, Business Administrator
Edmonton Society for Christian Education
13470 Fort Rd., Edmonton, AB
T5A 1C5
Fax (403) 478-1728.

STRATHROY, Ont.: Strathroy Community Chr. School invites teacher applications for a **possible opening in the upper junior/intermediate level** for the coming 97/98 school year. Applicants must be able to teach all core subjects and additional skills in computer and physical education would be an asset. Applicants with a Christian School Teachers Certificate, or who are willing to pursue this will be given preference.
Submit a letter of application, resume, college transcripts, personal philosophy of education and references to:
Mr. Henry Wiersema, Principal
Strathroy Comm. Chr. School
7880 Walkers Dr., R.R. #2
Strathroy, ON N7G 3H4
(519) 245-1934

Teachers

RED DEER, Alta.: The **Red Deer Christian School** is accepting applications for **part-time teaching positions** in French and music for the 1997/98 school year. Interested persons should direct their inquiries/resumes to:
Mr. R. Duggan, Principal
Red Deer Christian School,
5210 - 61 Street, Red Deer, AB
T4N 6N8. Tel.: (403) 346-5795;
Fax: (403) 347-3003.

ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: Beacon Chr. High School invites applications for a **possible opening in the area of English** for the 1997-98 school year. The successful applicant will have some drama background. Send resume and statement of educational philosophy to:
Ted Harris, Principal
Beacon Chr. High School
2 O'Malley Drive
St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7
Fax: (905) 937-1130

SMITHERS, B.C.: Bulkley Valley Christian School, Smithers B.C. (K-12, 370 students on 2 campuses) has a **definite opening** for September 1997 for a **high school science teacher** (preferably chemistry), with computer ability. Please address inquiries/resumes to the principal:
Mr. Evert Vroon,
B.V.Christian School, Secondary Campus,
P.O. Box 3635, Smithers, BC
V0J 2N0.
Tel.: (250) 847-4238;
Fax (250) 847-3564.

STRATFORD, Ont.: Stratford & District Christian School invites teaching applications for a **DEFINITE opening in Grade 1 & 2.** Strengths in music, computers and French would be an asset.
If you would like to be part of a dynamic Christian staff and community, please send your resume **by May 7, 1997,** to:
Mr. Edward J. Petrusma, Principal
Stratford & District Chr. School
130 Huron Rd., R.R.#1
Sebringville, ON N0K 1X0
Phone: (519) 393-5675
Fax: (519) 393-6306

WALLACEBURG, Ont.: Wallaceburg Chr. School. Applications are solicited for a **half-time Kindergarten teacher** and a **full-time teacher for a Grade 1-2 class.** Applications including a complete resume, perspective of Christian education and recommendations will be accepted by fax or mail.
Peter Van Manen, Principal
Wallaceburg Chr. School
693 Albert Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 1Y8
Phone: (519) 627-6013
Fax: (519) 627-5051

Teachers

MAPLE RIDGE, B.C.: Haney-Pitt Meadows Chr. School is an interdenominational school located 45 km east of Vancouver. Currently we offer Christian education in Grades K-8 with plans to add High School in the coming years. We will have **intermediate and middle school openings** in the Fall. Candidates with strengths in computer and science will have preference. Send a resume and covering letter to:
Mr. Rod Berg, Principal
Haney-Pitt Meadows Chr. School
12140-203 St.
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4V5

WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto Distr. Chr. High School invites applications for a **possible full-time English position** commencing Sept. 1997. Send applications to:
Ren Siebenga
c/o Toronto DCHS
377 Woodbridge Ave.
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8
Fax: (905) 851-9992
e-mail:
siebenga@tdch.torcon.com

BARRIE, Ont.: Timothy Chr. School invites applications for a **possible Grade 6/7 position with expertise in computers.** You will be required to give direction and leadership in our computer lab, work with our computer committee and assist the principal with staff development in the field of computers. Only successful applicants granted an interview will be contacted. Please forward resumes to:
Mrs. Jane Tjeerdsma
Timothy Chr. School
49 Ferris Lane
Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1

CAMBRIDGE, Ont.: Cambridge Chr. School invites teacher applications for a **Kindergarten position**, left vacant by the retirement of our present teacher. This position will be either 60% or 100% depending on enrolment. Please send resume and letter of application to:
Cambridge Chr. School
229 Myers Road
Cambridge, ON N1R 7H3
Attention: Andy VanderPloeg, Principal
Phone: (519) 623-2261
Fax: (519) 623-4042
Application deadline: April 25, 1997.

ORANGEVILLE, Ont.: Orangeville Chr. School invites applications for a **definite vacancy at the primary level** for the 1997-98 school year. Please send a resume and letter of application to:
Mr. George Hoytema, Principal
Orangeville Chr. School
P.O. Box 176
Orangeville, ON L9W 2Z6
Phone: (519) 941-3381

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, serving 377 students in K-9, located in central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for the 1997-98 school year. Three definite openings are:
1) Jr. High Math/Science;
2) Jr. High Physical Education/Language Arts and/or Social Studies;
3) Grade 4-9 French/other teaching duties.
Possible elementary openings may occur. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume and letter of application to:
John Piers, Principal
Lacombe Chr. School
5206 - 58 Street
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: (403) 782-6531
Fax: (403) 782-5760

LISTOWEL, Ont.: Listowel Chr. School invites applications for a **full-time teaching administrator** for the 1997-98 school year. Expect 50% teaching - 50% administrative time. Principal or vice-principal experience would be an asset. Vacancy to be filled Aug. 1, 1997. Listowel is a K-8 elementary school of approx. 115 students, 3 full-time and 4 part-time staff and is an interdenominational school representing 13 churches in the area. Please send resumes to:
Principal Search Committee
c/o Menno Eelkema
Listowel Chr. School
R.R. #1, Box 151
Listowel, ON N4W 3H2
at (519) 291-3097

TORONTO, Ont.: Timothy Chr. School in Rexdale, Ont., invites applications from qualified teachers for the following positions:
a **probable 90% Grade 7 position** (computer and sports skills essential) and a **possible 40% Grade 2 position**. TCS is a growing, multi-denominational school, with a caring, encouraging community. Please send resumes to:
Coby Jonker, Principal
Timothy Chr. School
28 Elmhurst Drive
Rexdale, ON M5W 2J5
Phone: (416) 741-5770
Fax: (416) 741-5770

For Rent

CLINTON, ONTARIO
ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES

available. 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call
(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.

Employment Opportunity

Social Service Work — Become part of our team of committed professionals providing loving care for needy children.
Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group homes in the Niagara peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, invites applications for **the position of live-in Child Care Worker(s).**
Single males and females are invited to apply. A married couple team approach may also be considered. Position available as early as **April 30th.**
For more information about our program, including salary and benefits, please call or write to:
Randy Klassen, Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, P.O.Box 397, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 (905) 892-4332.

Farm Help Wanted

Machine operator for large vegetable farm. Enthusiastic person with **farm-related experience,** to do general farm work and operate spraying and harvesting equipment. Pay commensurate with experience. **Phone (905) 775-0718; Fax (905) 778-1040.**

Personal

Christian lady, early sixties, young at heart, would like to meet gentleman of same age, for possible friendship. Please send letters to **File #2665, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St.Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Home Exchange

We, who live in **St.Catharines, Ont.**, are looking for a three-week **exchange of houses and vehicles** near the end of **July** and the beginning of **August** with someone in the **Vancouver area.** If interested, please call **Bert or Alice Witvoet at (905) 684-3991.**

For Rent

A large, comfortable, four-bedroom home in Ancaster. Excellent location. Flexible lease arrangement. **$ 1,200 per month,** including utilities. For more information, please call **(905) 648-2139, ext. 260 or 290.**

For rent: Three bedroom cottage in scenic Holten, the Neth.
Contact: A Borger at
(905) 623-6049

Classifieds/Events

For Rent

APARTMENTS: Redeemer College rents furnished, 1, 2 and 4 bedroom apartments May to August. Enjoy our pastoral setting while visiting the Hamilton/Niagara/Toronto region. Excellent daily, weekly and monthly rates. For reservations phone **(905) 648-2139, ext. 260.**

Real Estate

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.
Martindale Place, a Christian Retirement Community. Life-lease residences.
Construction of 21 patio homes with full basements and garages to begin June 1997. Prices start at $129.900. Call regarding apartment vacancies. Ask for Carol Lotz, salesperson for I. Bell Real Estate Broker Inc., **(905) 688-3537, 24 hr. pager.**

Miscellaneous

BUSINESS 97
an outstanding christian calling

A conference co-sponsored by Calvin College and Partners for Christian Development

May 30 and 31, 1997 on the Calvin College campus

Speakers will include:
- Richard Mouw
  President, Fuller Theological Sem.
- Tim Hoeksema
  CEO, Midwest Express Airlines
- Gaylen Byker
  President, Calvin College
- Mary Vermeer Andringa
  President, Vermeer Manufacturing
- Jack Jagt
  President, H.A. Astlett & Co., Inc.
- Sue Miller
  President, Das Essenhaus
- Bruce Ryskamp
  President, Zondervan Publishing
- Ray Vander Laan
  Biblical scholar and teacher

Fourteen workshops on topics including: family business, middle management, networking, economic development, risk, acquisition, employee diversity, profits, and community service.

Endorsed by the Canadian Christian Business Federation.

Cost: $150.00 for business registrants; $50.00 for current students.

For more information and registration materials call (616) 957-6600.

Teachers

CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TERRACE, B.C.

TEACHING POSITIONS OPEN

Centennial Chr. School invites applications from committed, Christian educators to fill definite openings for the 97/98 school year in the following areas:

Intermediate — Grade 5
High School — Social Studies
Art — Grades 4-10
French — Grades 7-10

These positions also involve teaching duties in other areas. Additional openings for classroom teachers are anticipated at primary and intermediate levels.

Centennial Chr. School presently offers Christian education to approximately 250 students in Kindergarten - Grade 10. The addition of grades 11 and 12 is being planned. Please contact:

Centennial Christian School
Frank Voogd, Principal
3608 Sparks Street, Terrace, BC V8G 2V6
Phone (250) 635-6173; Fax (250) 635-9385

Chemistry/Physics teacher needed

Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from **chemistry/physics specialists** who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins **August 1, 1997.** Send applications to **Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com**

Smithville District Christian High School

The **Smithville District Chr. High School** has **possible full-time and/or part- time vacancies in science and geography.** Please address all inquiries and send letters of application, resume and teaching credentials to:

Marc Stroobosscher, Principal
6488 Smithville Rd., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Fax: (905) 957-3431; phone: (905) 957-3255

Canadian Federation of Chr. Ref. Women

Convention — 1997
"Renewed In Christ"

DATE: May 14, 1997, at 10 a.m.
PLACE: Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.
SPEAKERS: Rev. H.R. De Bolster, Mrs. Edith De Graaf
MUSIC: Christiaan Teeuwsen, Children's Choir

How to get tickets:
Send your cheque (payable only to: CONVENTION - 1997) to:
CONVENTION — 1997
P.O. Box 335, Grimsby, ON L3M 4H8
Include a self-addressed , stamped envelope.
Price per ticket is $20.00 (coffee, tea and lunch included).

SEATING IS LIMITED! Tickets will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.
A map with directions will be added to your tickets. Come early!
Coffee will be ready by 9:00 a.m.
Doors will be closed during the opening ceremonies.

Teachers

Ottawa Christian School

invites applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

We also have the following potential openings:

ONE JUNIOR POSITION
and
TWO INTERMEDIATE POSITIONS

Our school offers a program from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8 to 165 students. We have more than 25 denominations represented at our school and support beyond the traditional supporting community continues to grow.

Individuals interested in applying for either the principal position or the teaching positions are encouraged to contact the school **immediately.** Please fax a letter of application and a c.v. to the school as soon as possible. Interviews for selected candidates will take place on April 12 and 14 or an otherwise mutually convenient date.

Education Committee, Ottawa Christian School
2191 Benjamin Avenue, Ottawa, ON K2A 1P6
Tel.: (613) 722-5836; Fax: (613) 722-5836

Laurentian Hills Christian School
Kitchener, Ont.

LHCS was established in 1967 and by the Lord's grace has grown to the current 170 students and 8 staff members. Due to the need to expand the number of classrooms and teachers, Laurentian Hills Christian School requests applications for the following teaching positions for the 1997-1998 school year.

A full-time upper elementary school teacher is required with particular interests and strengths in teaching **French and Physical Education.** This position may include some rotary assignments in the upper grades.

There is also a **possible opening for a part-time (approx. 50%) teacher** at the middle grade level.

Please direct all inquiries and resumes identifying specific strengths and interests to:

Luke Janssen, Principal
c/o Laurentian Hills Christian School
11 Laurentian Drive, Kitchener, ON N2E 1C1
Phone: (519) 576-6700

Events

Reformed Engaged Encounter

A wedding is a day...
A marriage is a lifetime!

An opportunity for couples contemplating engagement or Christian marriage to look openly and honestly at their commitment to one another.

Date: May 16-18, 1997
Location: Pearce Williams Conference Grounds, Iona Station, Ont.
To obtain brochure or to register, please call:
Fred & Doreen Breukelman at
(905) 957-4895

Advertising

Houston Christian Reformed Church
is seeking a
Youth Leader

This would be a part-time position with a family-oriented church community in the beautiful Bulkley Valley. For more information and a job description contact:

Houston Christian Reformed Church
Box 6, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0
or phone (250) 845-7790 or (250) 845-2838

Harry Snoek Limited
Real Estate Development & Investment

32 Finch Avenue East
North York, Ontario M2N 4R1
Tel.: (416) 221-7400

At Harry Snoek Limited we have had forty years of success in real estate investment and development. Over the years many have joined us, by lending money or by directly participating in land investments. We invite you to join as well.

7%

To diversify our borrowing and to expand investment participation we pay very attractive interest rates, currently 7%. Call us for details about lending or investing. Your money is secure with us.

Lambton Christian High School

The school is soliciting applications to fill a vacancy on our staff in September of this year. The successful applicant will be responsible for administrating our "state of the art" computer facility, as well as heading up the mathematics department. Please direct all inquiries, letters of application, resumes, statement of faith and philosophy of education to:

Wayne Drost, Principal
295 Essex St., Sarnia, ON N7T 4S3
(519) 337-9122; fax: (519) 337-2541

RESEARCH/ADVOCACY POSITIONS

CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE, a national ecumenical public policy organization, may be seeking research/advocacy staff in the fall of 1997 or 1998.

If you have a graduate degree or significant experience and wish to express your interest, please submit your resume and a covering letter outlining your public policy interests, views of faith-based public policy work and understanding of the role of CPJ. All inquiries will be held in confidence.

Send to: Harry J. Kits
Executive Director
Citizens for Public Justice
#311, 229 College Street
Toronto, ON M5T 1R4
or cpj@web.net

CPJ
CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

Deadline: June 1, 1997.

KOMT NU MET ZANG — 1997

This past Good Friday the annual Dutch service "Komt Nu Met Zang" was held at Redeemer College in Ancaster. Over 900 people were in attendance singing the familiar Dutch songs of faith, and Ds. Hoefnagel from Dundas was the speaker for the evening. This service is available on cassette and can be ordered by filling out the order form below.

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No volunteers?

(NC)—Try to imagine what would happen to our community if no citizens were willing to volunteer their time and skills to help others and support worthy causes. Here are some questions to think about:

1. What if no one answered crisis hotlines or gave support to people in shelters, hospitals and homes for seniors?
2. What if no one took time to raise funds for research into deadly diseases?
3. What if no one was willing to serve on the boards of voluntary organizations or on community committees?

A community without its volunteers is unthinkable!

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK
13 – 19 APRIL 1997

A seriously injured fisherman tells how he was born twice

Translated by Bert Witvoet

One of our readers in British Columbia sent us the following Dutch article taken from Friesch Dagblad. She asked if we could translate and publish it. We do so with pleasure.

News bulletin: Explosion on a fishing vessel, the UK 114. Three men are unexpectedly snatched out of this life. The captain and Haaije de Jong survive the disaster. Haaije is taken from the ship by helicopter. He suffers terrible pain. Haaije tells his story:

PHOTOS: HELLPONTEN

Haaije de Jong

"When I was hanging in the stretcher — or was it a net? — to be hauled into the helicopter, I thought it would be done quickly. But something went wrong. Instead of going up I went down, under the water where I started to gag. I thought: I'm going to drown on top of all this. Fortunately the winch tightened quickly and I was cranked up. Then I saw the burning craft below. It didn't look good. A few hours later the boat sank."

For a month they treated de Jong in a hospital in the German town of Kiel. Then he was transported again by helicopter to the hospital in Heerenveen. That was an enormous relief for Jelly, his wife, who had had to travel a thousand kilometers a day to visit him.

Haaije de Jong's body was traumatized through the explosion. Everything was done to repair his shattered pelvis as best as possible. But it remains a question whether he will ever walk normally again. Yet de Jong is full of courage. The greatest support in these difficult circumstances is his faith in God. In fact, he wishes that everyone could have such faith.

How did he manage to acquire such faith? Was he born with it? No, you can't inherit faith from your parents, he'll tell you. Even if they are great believers and try as hard as possible to pass the faith on to you, you have to accept it yourself. You are the one who has to make the decision.

As a teenager, Haaije wasn't ready for that at all. A lot of other things kept him occupied.

Sins? What're you talking about?

De Jong tells how he came to know God:

"I was 16. What to do? Look for a job and then do the same thing, day in, day out, until I'm 65?

"The mere thought gave me the willies. Was there no other possibility? What about going to sea? And that's how at age 17 I ended up on an ocean-going vessel. I saw almost the whole world and experienced a lot. I lived it up. Drinking and fighting were all part of it. After all, you're young, right?

"I said my prayers. After all, I had a Christian upbringing. And whenever I was home on furlough, I went with my family to church.

"But whenever I heard the minister pray asking God to forgive our sins, I would say to myself: 'Sins? Man, what're you talking about? What did I do wrong?' Well, maybe there were a few things that wouldn't pass muster, but for the rest, I was in good shape."

One fight too many

"One time we passed through the Bosporus coming from the Black Sea to Dakar, and I got into a fight with Spanish and Portuguese crew members. That same night I was taken from the ship. They took me to shore, and sent me toward Istanbul. In other words, I was fired, or sacked, as they say. After a month of furlough, which was owed to me, I ended up in the fishing industry.

"The woman I married had been brought up outside the church. But we did marry in the church. Of course, that didn't mean that from there on we were going to serve God.

"Although I was not a drunkard, I knew how to consume alcohol. After all, after you've been at sea for a whole week, you deserve a few drinks when you come home. If there are problems, then that's always the other person's fault, never yours."

"I did go to church regularly. I was used to that. Externally, everything was fine.

"Then one time the pastor spoke about the passage in which Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. I don't know why, but that sermon really spoke to me. For the first time in all those years I saw my life in God's light. I no longer saw myself as that neatly dressed churchgoer in the balcony, that decent, hardworking husband and father who provided well for his family. What I saw was a lost sinner on the way to hell. The Lord himself showed me what sin was.

"In the past I had often been told these things. I was spoon-fed the stuff. But it never penetrated. And how could it? Because on the inside I was spiritually dead.

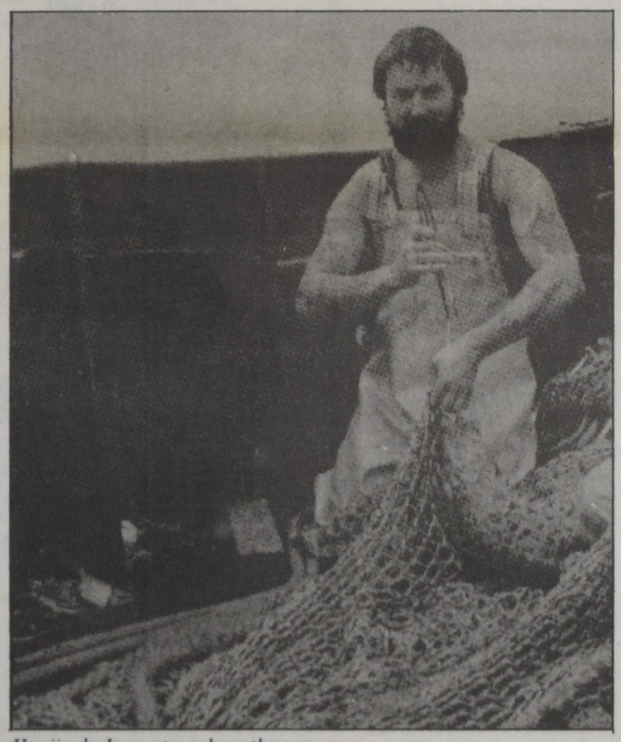
"But in that moment, there in the balcony of that village church, God brought me to life. I was, as the Bible calls it, born again. I saw myself the way I appeared in the eyes of God — sinful and dirty. Just like Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, so he had to wash me with his blood."

Daily practice

"The Bible speaks of this as a mystery. We can't comprehend it, but it is no less true: on the cross Jesus underwent the punishment which I had deserved. That's why God forgives me my sins. I saw that and I believed it that very moment. That was the new life that God began in me then. That was my re-birth.

"Perhaps someone will ask me whether as born-again person I am at once perfect. No, I'm not. Your old nature continually tries to play a role in your life. But the Lord through his Spirit gives you the power to resist the 'old person.' You can't do that on your own, no matter how hard you try.

"Again and again you need the Lord, all day, throughout your life. Born again one time, then a daily repentance after that — that's how I see it."



Haaije de Jong at work on the sea.

Haaije de Jong lives at Hearewei 13, 8536 TM Oosterzee, the Netherlands.

News Digest

St. Stupid's Day Parade held

SAN FRANCISCO (S.F. Examiner) — Revellers in the annual St. Stupid's Day Parade in San Francisco ridiculed the Heaven's Gate cult members and their fascination with the Hale-Bopp comet. "That's pretty much the stupidest thing people have done in a long time," said Ron Davis, referring to the 39 people who killed themselves recently in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., in order to reach a "higher level" by spaceship.

Davis was one of about 250 people who spent two hours celebrating the sublime art of being stupid. Held for the 19th consecutive year, the April Fools' Day event is the only holy day recognized by the First Church of the Last Laugh in San Francisco.

Dalai Lama prays for pigs

TAIWAN (Reuters) — Reacting to Taiwan's present hog epidemic, the Dalai Lama has pledged to pray for the doomed pigs' souls. Tibet's exiled spiritual leader said he was concerned about the island-wide outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that could result in the death or slaughter of up to 1.6 million pigs.

"I heard that the condition was serious and many pigs had to be buried alive," he told state radio on the fifth day of a tour of Taiwan. "I hope everybody can get together and pray for their *samsara* (transmigration)."

Radar redundant?

HALIFAX (CP) — Canada's cash-strapped air-force wants to turn off some of its new northern early warning radar sites occasionally to cut costs. "They're studying the idea," said Col. Gary George, a military expert who worked on the design and set-up of the $1 billion unmanned radar system. "If you can turn a system off and save right now and turn it on when you really need it... that may be a smarter way of doing business."

The primary mission of the 47-site electronic system is to watch the skies for threats from foreign bombers and missiles. It was considered a crucial first line of defence during the Cold War.